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MISS ALICE HUGHES,

THE COUNTESS FITZWILLIAM AND HER CHILDREN.

52, Gower Street.



THE Journal for all interested in
Country Life and Country Pursuits

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
<i>Our Portrait Illustration: The Countess Fitzwilliam and her Children</i> ...	669, 670
<i>The New Committee</i> ...	670
<i>Country Notes</i> ...	671
<i>The Fitzwilliam Hounds. (Illustrated)</i> ...	673
<i>Hunting Notes</i> ...	675
<i>Grinling Gibbons. (Illustrated)</i> ...	676
<i>Racing Notes</i> ...	678
<i>A Lancashire Duck Decoy. (Illustrated)</i> ...	679
<i>In the Garden</i> ...	681
<i>A Lowland Stream. (Illustrated)</i> ...	683
<i>Pan, the Rush-pipe Man</i> ...	684
<i>Gardens Old and New: Dunster Castle. (Illustrated)</i> ...	686
<i>Laying Competition. (Illustrated)</i> ...	695
<i>In Praise of Sundials</i> ...	696
<i>An Essex Estuary. (Illustrated)</i> ...	696
<i>From the Farms</i> ...	698
<i>On the Green. (Illustrated)</i> ...	700
<i>A Book of the Week</i> ...	701
<i>The Society of Portrait Painters</i> ...	702
<i>Correspondence</i> ...	703

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THE NEW COMMITTEE.

NOTHING that the Government has done stands out more absolutely clear of partisan feeling than the appointment of the new reorganising committee. In the teeth of the report issued by the War Commission, neither the supporters nor the opponents of the Government can deny that from beginning to end it was a complete muddle. Look at it from what point we will, no other conclusion is possible. The crisis found us in an unprepared condition. Our first movements were of the most random and haphazard description. Generals were sent over to South Africa without instructions, and without plans of their own. The early operations resulted in defeat, and disaster, and loss, till a less resolute nation than our own would have lost heart altogether. When we came to work out the bill it was found that, although success crowned our efforts in the end, it had been gained at an expense unprecedented in the annals of warfare, and this chapter in our history is one that will be read only as a warning. Since then all the authorities have agreed that the evil was not of a merely accidental and transitory character, but affected the whole organisation of the War Office. Looking at the matter widely, we may perhaps put it in this way. Except for a few little wars that made no appreciable demand upon the

resources of the nation, England, until the reception of President Kruger's ultimatum, had enjoyed one of the longest periods of peace in her annals. No doubt this brought inestimable blessings with it: trade prospered, riches increased, and progress was made in many directions; but greatly though we value peace, it would be absurd to affect blindness to some of the evils connected with it. Through long disuse our fighting machinery had become rusty and inefficient. Our generals, accustomed more to pageantry and autumn manoeuvres than to active service, had become theoretical rather than practical, and the majority showed a very decided inability to adapt themselves to the conditions under which the South African contest had to be conducted. In the end the philosophers of a future generation will probably look back upon our errors with this kindly excuse, but it would be no excuse for us if we did not seize the occasion to bring our fighting forces once more to their old condition of efficiency.

In the appointment of the Committee the Prime Minister and his advisers have shown a thorough appreciation of the weaknesses of the position. They have chosen as chairman Viscount Esher, who made some of the most pregnant suggestions contained in the War Report. He is in every sense of the word a capable man of affairs. During 1880 and 1885, when as Mr. Reginald Brett he represented Penrhyn and Falmouth in the House of Commons, he was noted not only for his extensive knowledge, but for the practical wisdom with which he applied it. As private secretary to the Duke of Devonshire, and, again, as permanent secretary to the Office of Works, his business aptitude was still further developed, and his note to the Report was one of the most sensible things about it. Rumour had it that Mr. Balfour wished Lord Esher to join the Cabinet, but there is reason to be glad now that he refused. As a member of the Ministry he would have been liable to be ousted from his post with the fall of the Government, and, of course, that might have occurred at the very time when his attention was most wanted at the War Office. This objection held not only against Lord Esher, but against the appointment of Lord Kitchener, which was also clamoured for at the same time. Men like these ought not to belong to a party whose lease of power is always liable to a sudden termination, but the proper place in which the benefit of their energies can be obtained is that of permanent servants of the Crown. This Committee, we understand, will continue in existence independent of the vicissitudes of party fortune.

The naval officer of the Committee is Admiral Sir John Fisher, Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth. He is in every way qualified to serve in that capacity, since he has commanded our principal fleets abroad, has been in active service, and has twice been Lord Commissioner of the Board of Admiralty. He is known to be a strong man, and also one of those who have a clearly-defined object before them, and are well fitted to work towards it. The Army is to be represented by Colonel Sir George Clarke, who since 1901 has been Governor of the State of Victoria in the Australian Commonwealth. He is a most energetic and able officer, who made his influence felt many years ago upon the Hartington Commission. There can be no doubt that in choosing him the right man has been put into the right place. This Committee has at the War Office a Minister in the person of Mr. Arnold-Forster who may be reckoned on to second with energy any proposal it may draw up for the thorough reorganisation of our forces. The composition of the Committee, too, is calculated to ensure the co-operation of the military and naval departments of the Service, so that it can hardly do otherwise than improve to an enormous degree both branches. The step taken by Mr. Balfour is most sensible, and will do something towards removing the accusation which has been made loudly and frequently that the fiscal discussion was, to use a slang expression, a put up thing, started with the object of distracting attention from the mistakes made in the South African War. We do not for a moment endorse these charges, nor do we disclaim them. They are not germane to the present argument. The point is that our organisation is defective, and that at last promising steps towards its reconstruction have been taken by the party in office. It is to be hoped that public men, on whatever side of politics they happen to be, will join their efforts to ensure that the work of the Committee be made effective. Even those who are least aggressive in their attitude must recognise that it is absurd for us to possess land or sea forces unless they are in every respect efficient for the task they have to perform.

Our Portrait Illustration.

THIS week a portrait of the Countess Fitzwilliam and her two daughters forms our frontispiece. Lady Fitzwilliam is the daughter of the first Marquess of Zetland.



THE ninth of November this year proved to be a very typical Lord Mayor's Day—that is to say, it was dull, inclined to fog, and at times a drizzling rain fell, but these circumstances did not prevent the assemblage of a large crowd. The procession, however, was shorn of some of its ancient picturesqueness, as the emblematic figures and coaches were left out, and in their place were the materials of a military pageant. Probably this marks a new era in civic history. If the Lord Mayor's Show becomes modernised we can scarcely think of anything that will not be subjected to the same process, and, in fact, the procession itself is in danger of becoming a thing of the past. It has long ceased to have the meaning originally attached to it, and has become a simple pageant. We can scarcely believe, if change on the present lines were to continue, that the sightseers, who for so many generations have assembled on Lord Mayor's Day, will feel the same attraction that they used to do.

The new Lord Mayor is Sir James Thomson Ritchie, and his name would be well known if for no other reason than that he is a brother of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer. He comes from the north of the Tweed, and is a man of affairs in the commercial sense of that phrase. His wife died five years ago, and the place of Lady Mayoress will have to be taken by his daughter, who, fortunately for herself, has several sisters, who no doubt will assist in the performance of these onerous duties. We have never had a more popular Lord Mayor, and on the part of the public the feeling is one of certainty that he will discharge the responsibilities of the office in a manner not unworthy of the traditions of his predecessors.

In the banqueting-hall Mr. Balfour scarcely rose to the occasion. The ninth of November witnessed many historic utterances in the days when Mr. Gladstone and Lord Beaconsfield faced one another in the forum. It was an occasion which produced many a significant declaration of policy. Mr. Balfour did not follow the old convention. As is usual with him, he made a speech that was at once pleasant and charming and graceful, but those who waited for any serious intimation of policy waited in vain. As was right and proper, he paid a high compliment to the memory of his illustrious uncle. He glanced warily and shyly at the fiscal question, and hurried on to foreign politics, where, though he did not find the diplomatic sky was without a cloud, he saw room for peaceful and optimistic views. He touched upon the King's visits to foreign Courts, and devoted a portion of his time to remarks about the Alaska Award. Then with a warning about decaying nations and a tribute to Lord Lansdowne, he brought to a close a speech in which he had given an illustration of the fine art of saying much and telling nothing.

Very considerable anxiety was aroused by the unexpected announcement that the German Emperor has just undergone an operation for the removal of a growth in his throat. People remember the grave calamities due to diseases of the throat, and the rumour current at one time that in him had been discovered symptoms of the disease from which his father died. Fortunately, the physicians were able to announce that the polypus which had to be removed was not of a malignant character, and that the Emperor had come through the operation safely and well. Nevertheless, the uneasiness has not been entirely removed. With all his faults, Kaiser William is one of the most influential and conspicuous figures in European politics. In spite of the talk about his mailed fist and his indiscreet telegram to President Kruger, he has, on the whole, worked for peace, and his removal from the scene of his labours could not be regarded as other than a world-wide calamity.

The career of Lord Rowton divides itself as it were into two parts. Latterly we have come to think of him chiefly as a

philanthropist, and a singular thing it is to think that the gay, fashionable, and apparently frivolous golden youth of forty years ago should have developed not only into one whose works were to prove his love for his fellow-men, but into one able to express that love with a business-like capacity that promises to make of the Rowton Houses an enduring monument to his fame. The East End "doss-house" has always been more or less of a scandal, and even those who were not reduced to that abject penury in which the "twopenny rope" is a luxury, were as badly off as the "submerged tenth." Single men of the poorer classes had a very great difficulty in finding nightly accommodation that was at once clean, respectable, and cheap. Lord Rowton solved this problem for them, and for that, if for no other reason, his name ought to be held in lasting esteem.

But in saying this we do not forget the interesting part he played in early life as the secretary and confidential friend of Lord Beaconsfield, who, as he declared, loved him at the first introduction for his father's sake, and latterly for his own. Lord Rowton had a profound admiration for the great Tory leader, and served him whole-heartedly, protecting him like a faithful servant might have done from the bores and worries that afflict a man in high position. One result was that Lord Beaconsfield at his death bequeathed to him his notes, papers, and other material for an official biography. This biography, however, has not taken shape. Rumour often said that it was on the way, but Lord Rowton, with a discretion that was perhaps excessive, kept it back and kept it back, first, it is said, at the desire of the late Queen, and latterly for other reasons. The result is that we never have had an official biography of Lord Beaconsfield, and possibly never will. The Conservative chief was in this respect not so fortunate as Mr. Gladstone, who entered politics before him, and outlived him, and has had his biography done, and well done, by his lieutenant Mr. John Morley.

THE DAWN OF LOVE.

Love has come to me on the golden wings of morning,
Coming as the day comes, with roses in her hair;
With her lovely looks all the dewy fields adorning,
Diademed of sunlight, and garmented with air.
Very fair is she—could I tell how fair her face is
I could tell the wonders of night, and dawn, and day,
The mystery of dreams, and the spell of lonely places,
All the grace of April, and all the scent of May.
Love has come to me, and the earth is clothed with glory,
Singing in the valley, and sunrise on the hill.
Oh! the pulse of life, and the old immortal story,
Come with airs of Eden, and pure and perfect still.

R. G. T. COVENTRY,

While a great deal of complaint is being heard about individual trades, it is satisfactory to find from the Board of Trade Returns that business as a whole is in a most flourishing and satisfactory condition. This is true equally of the imports and of exports. During the month of October we imported into this country £904,000 worth of goods more than in the corresponding month of last year, and at the same time we exported £726,000 more. Most satisfactory is it to note that the chief gain comes under the head of manufactured articles. Shipments of coal actually fell by 233,000 tons, or £388,000 value. The sale of ships was also less by £229,000, and a reduction of £355,000 is shown in telegraph cables. The great gains are in machinery, in manufactured iron, in woollen goods, and in minor articles. That the recovery is not a mere accident is shown by the figures of the whole ten months, which give an increase of £6,195,000 imports, and a gain of £8,604,000 in the value of exports. The plain deduction to be drawn from these figures is that after the period of reaction through which we have just passed, business has once more emerged into a condition of pronounced activity, and this is all the more satisfactory because in the natural course of events it might have been thought that the disastrous harvest would have thrown a gloom over the whole commercial survey.

Some very true words were spoken in the course of the presidential address at the meeting the other day of the Royal Institute of British Architects on the need which exists in this country for some recognised body of expert opinion to be consulted on all schemes of public improvement in London and the great provincial towns. In London, long the Cinderella of European capitals, a city of industry but not of beauty, sporadic attempts have been made of late years to carry out necessary schemes of reconstruction, with an eye to dignity and beauty as well as to mere utility, but probably few persons would be prepared to assert that the best use has been made of these opportunities. And in the recent case of the various suggestions

for the north frontage of the widened Strand under the London County Council's scheme of improvements, we have seen that body courteously but firmly reject every proposal it received, and adopt the cheapest and ugliest of all the alterations. Whatever the artistic competence of the London County Council may be, its members are obviously not elected on that consideration; and it is much to be regretted that no organised body at present exists to whom these questions might be referred for expert comment and advice. The opinion of a recognised authority of this kind would carry a weight which is at present unfortunately lacking in these affairs.

The great storms of 1903 will long be remembered, if only for the irreparable damage they have done to so many of our fine old trees. Among others, two of great interest, especially to naturalists, were practically destroyed during the great gale of September 10th, namely, the oak and ash planted by Gilbert White in 1731, in his orchard at The Wakes, Selborne. A correspondent in *Nature Notes* writes: "The ash is irretrievably destroyed and will have to be removed, but the oak, by topping, may be preserved. Several other trees are injured, but the beautiful wych elm is not much hurt." Gilbert White was only eleven years of age when he planted these trees, and writing in 1790 to Marsham he said: "In a humble way I have been an early planter myself. The time of planting and growth of my trees are as follows: Oak in 1731, 4ft. 5in.; ash in 1731, 4ft. 6½in.; spruce fir in 1751, 5ft."

The great naphtha fire which has been raging for six weeks past near the town of Baku, in the Caucasus, may be safely reckoned as one of the biggest blazes which the world has ever seen. From five great "gushers" of the natural oil and five of the reservoirs in which it is stored enormous columns of flame have been towering day and night to a height at which they are visible for twenty or thirty miles around, and the entire region is described as being enwrapped in a pall of smoke often sufficiently dense to conceal the light of the sun. Not even the great forest fires which recently devastated wide areas in North America presented such an awe-inspiring spectacle for such a length of time together. But fortunately the narrow localisation of such blazes as this at Baku always prevents them from being dangerous in proportion to their size. No fire, on the other hand, is so impossible to stop, and there is nothing to do but to wait till the conflagrations burn themselves out, which, in the case of the "gushers," may take many months. Labour troubles have been acute in the Baku oil-fields of late, and it is believed that this enormous destruction is due to the act of an incendiary.

Ski-running is such a very picturesque pastime that all connected with it is of interest even for those who would as soon go up in a so-called navigable balloon as put on the long foot-sledges, and to whom an altitude of 2,000ft. with the thermometer often below zero does not appeal as attractive. These were the conditions on which the secretary of the Ski Club of Great Britain was able to congratulate the members as prevailing during part of last season in the south of Loch Ness, where ski-running seems to be pursued in most favourable circumstances, the moors being fairly free from heather, and the snow fairly constant all through the winter and generally frozen to a firm surface. The very idea of a Ski Club and of ski-running in our islands will be novel to many.

An attempt on a large scale to introduce English song-birds into British Columbia is at present being made. The Victoria (B.C.) Natural History Society is taking out a consignment of about 500 birds, consisting of 100 pairs of goldfinches, 100 pairs of larks, and 50 pairs of robins. They go by way of New York to Victoria. In accordance with the arrangements which have been made, half of the consignment will be placed in Vancouver, and taken care of there until next spring, when they will be distributed throughout the woodlands of the lower mainland. The remainder will be placed in Beacon Hill Park aviary, and kept until spring, when they will be given their liberty at various points on Vancouver Island. It will be very interesting to hear if this extensive scheme of acclimatisation proves a success. The climate of Vancouver ought to suit the British birds well.

The Canadians seem to have their troubles over game matters as well as other countries. Of late the American pot-hunters have been making sad havoc amongst the ducks on Lake Ontario, chasing the birds from place to place with gasoline and steam launches, and slaughtering them indiscriminately. The law in Canadian waters prohibits the use of these gasoline and steam launches for shooting purposes, and while Canadian sportsmen strictly observe the law, these American pot-hunters are driving all the birds they do not kill away. So great has been the trouble that an officer of the Canadian Game Depart-

ment has been stationed on Lake Ontario to arrest and punish all offenders that he may find.

The news has been received with universal satisfaction that Her Royal Highness Princess Alice of Albany has become engaged to His Serene Highness Prince Alexander of Teck. It is little more than twenty-one years since the Princess Alice was born at Windsor, the daughter of one of the most popular Princes in Great Britain. Since the death of her father, in 1884, she has lived mostly at Claremont with her mother, the Duchess of Albany. But even at her early age she has become associated with many of the philanthropic and useful movements of her time.

The Cambridge people have always been in the habit of ascribing their apparent inferiority to Oxford on the river to the fact that their own Cam is so much less of an arena (if that be a sound word to use of the water) for practice than the Oxford Isis; but this year, for a good deal of the present term, at least, they have had a river wide enough to please them. The coaching for the coxswainless fours at both Universities has been extremely difficult, even from the back of a tall horse to hoist the coach above the floods. Third Trinity, as for a year or two past, has been a capital crew at Cambridge; but none of the Oxford colleges have had very good boats on, and the coach's aid has failed them after somewhere about the 'Varsity boat-house, because the horse could go no further through the deepening flood. In this "coxswainless four" business Third Trinity probably have been better for one or two seasons than any Oxford college boat. The circumstances of strong stream and the general conditions of flood tell very hardly on this particular kind of rowing, where the oars have to do their own steering, but they afford excellent practice for watermanship.

CHILDREN.

I think in little children God is best,
The best to love, and very kind to know:
They come, and He is then our gentle Guest,
And when they leave all goodness seems to go:
In their small hands they bring a healing power;
Their frolic laugh will chase the darkest pain;
With so much warmth they fill the angel hour
That our chilled hearts must need unbend again.
And so among God's great and gifted men
I deem the chief are they whose hearts are still
Like little children's. With a wayward ken
They judge, and love, and give, and think no ill.
'Tis they who make the world less harsh and cold,
God's simple giants, who never have grown old.

LILIAN STREET.

The news with regard to the *Terra Nova*, the ship that is to go to the relief of Captain Scott and the *Discovery*, is of rather a mixed character. It is good, indeed, so far as concerns the character of the ship herself, for she made a very good run, after the big ship that was towing her had left her to her own devices, and proved herself thoroughly seaworthy in heavy weather; but with regard to her crew the news is less satisfactory. It appears that seven of them were put in prison at Hobart Town, in Tasmania, for fourteen days for absence without leave. It may be argued that some licence reasonably might be given to men who are about to start on such an expedition as that for which the *Terra Nova* is specially designed, but absence without leave is a serious offence. And however we look upon that, what can be said on behalf of the three men in addition who were sentenced to a month for misconduct on shipboard, and, as the report adds, though probably not on shipboard, "of assaulting the police"? On the whole it hardly seems the crew to inspire great confidence for the performance of the arduous work that is before them. But perhaps the present discipline will be efficacious in reformation. At the moment of writing the *Morning* is daily expected to join the *Terra Nova* at Hobart Town.

In reference to Arctic exploration, Captain Peary, at present in this country with the object of enquiring for the American Government into our system of naval barracks, has already spoken with some confidence of his forthcoming attempt to reach the North Pole, for which he has been granted leave of absence for three years. The details of his scheme appear to be still in embryo, but he has announced his intention of proceeding by way of Smith's Sound, which gives a land-base nearer to the Pole by a hundred miles than any other route. Captain Peary expresses the hope of being able to carry through his expedition in the course of a single year if the conditions should prove sufficiently favourable for getting in the first summer as far north as the Alert, but all must depend on the condition of the ice.

Coal has been sought so long in the Kentish borings without any commercial success, that the public at large has come to regard the whole undertaking as something of a wild-goose chase. A year or two ago the work was actually abandoned, but it has lately been taken up again with renewed energy and confidence, and it seems quite within the bounds of possibility that in the not very distant future this Kentish pit may take its place in the ranks of our national coal-fields. For years past, of course, it has been established that coal is there,

but it is doubtful whether either its quantity or quality is sufficiently good to enable it to be worked remuneratively in face of the great difficulties imposed by the depth of the seams and the continual flooding of the shaft. Both these drawbacks have, however, so it is stated, been satisfactorily overcome in some of the French and Belgian coal-fields, and the contemplated development of Dover as an important mercantile port is likely to lend an additional stimulus to the production of a coal supply so near at hand.

THE FITZWILLIAM HOUNDS.



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HUNTSMAN, WHIPS, AND THE PACK.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE Fitzwilliam is one of the oldest packs in England. By this is meant not merely that the Hunt is an historic one—that might be said of the Quorn or the Pytchley, whose kennels are filled with packs of modern origin—but that the Fitzwilliam, like the Belvoir, the Brocklesby, and the Badminton, has a pack of hounds of which the pedigrees go back into the middle of the last century. The earliest kennel book we have ever seen is at Badminton, and is dated 1729. But there were in all probability records of the pack kept at Milton at the same, or even an earlier, date. These were, however, destroyed by fire. The oldest extant books are dated 1760. The tap-root of the present pack is the old Fitzwilliam blood, though on it have been grafted Belvoir, Brocklesby, and many other famous strains; yet the Fitzwilliam have always preserved their family type and character. This is a result which can only be brought about when a pack is owned by one family. The Milton pack has never been out of the possession of the Fitzwilliams. Of the 140 years over which the kennel records extend there have been for ten seasons Masters hunting the country who have not been members of the family. But the pack has always been kennelled at Milton, and the continuity has never been broken; so that when we look at the hounds of to-day we know that we see

descendants of the famous hounds of which we read in the past. Indeed, the Fitzwilliam hounds have had a great influence on the building up of other packs. We find, for example, in the Badminton records the name of Fitzwilliam Marmion, noted for the certainty with which he seemed to divine the presence of a fox in covert, and the way he would make straight for the place where his quarry was. The fox once afoot, no hound worked more eagerly than he. Then we read of Darter and Druid, who were, with other hounds, matched against ten couple of Mr. Meynell's. At the end of forty minutes these two hounds were leading. There was no man who did more for the pack than the famous Tom Sebright, who came to Milton in 1821. Tom Sebright had been whipper-in to the famous Osbaldeston, and learned from him much hound lore. Naturally when he became huntsman to Lord

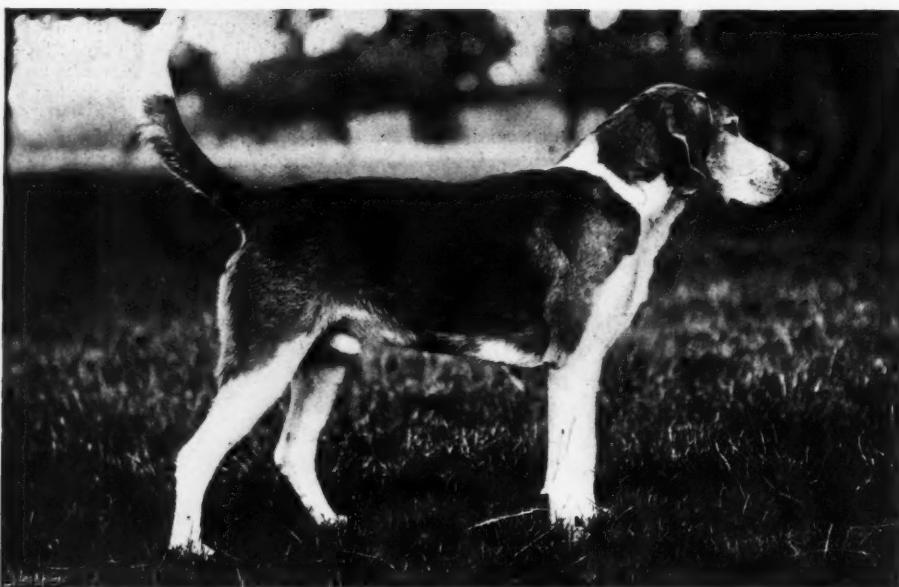
Fitzwilliam he brought in some of the Osbaldeston blood, and a hound of comparatively modern times, Flamer, showed the excellence of the old blood when he entered the very first day he was taken out, and after taking as foremost a part as any old hound in the chase, carried home the fox's head at night. There is, of course, both Belvoir and Brocklesby blood in the kennel, and, like these famous kennels, the Fitzwilliam has done much for the foxhound all over England. No pack has preserved



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ON THEIR BENCHES.

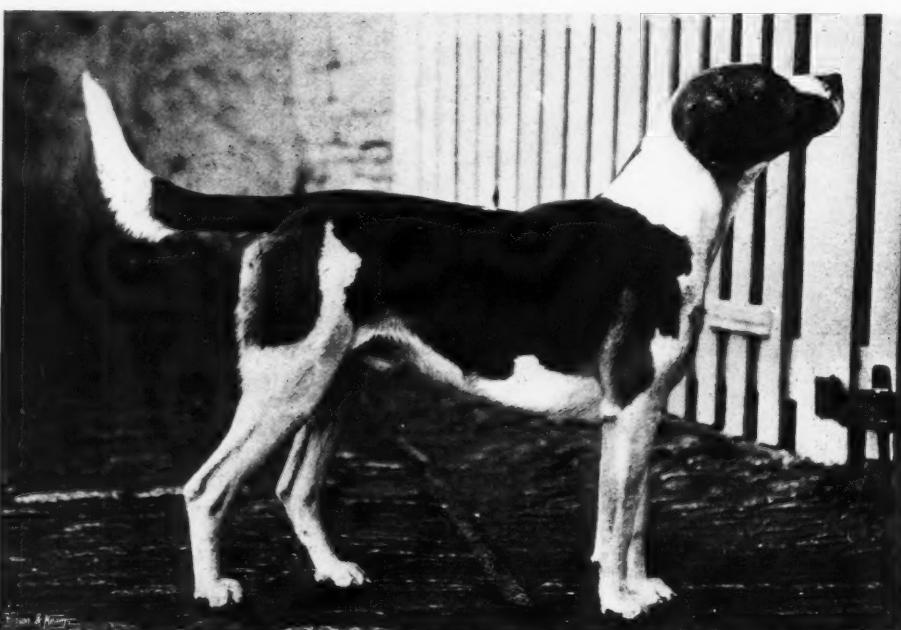
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DORSET.

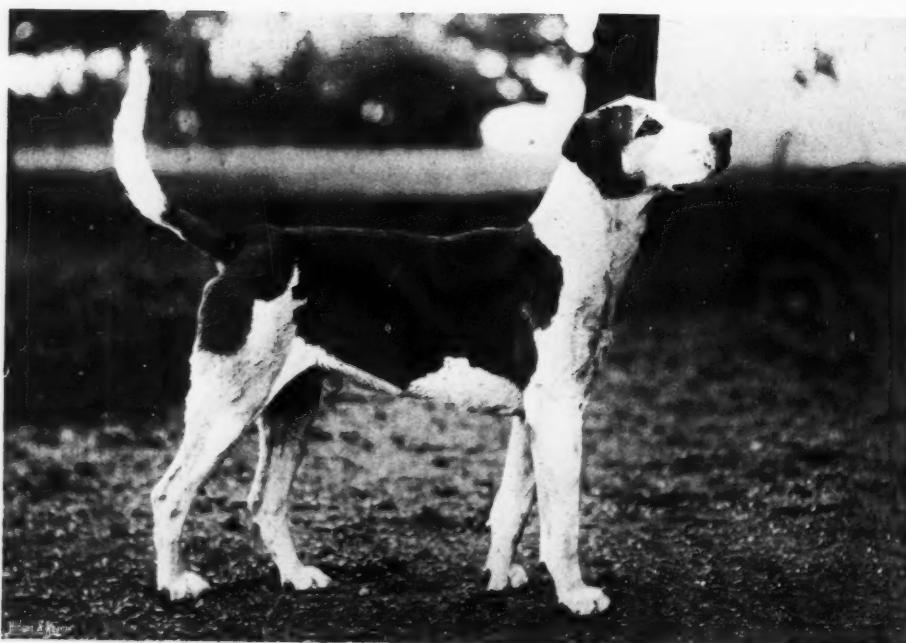
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Copyright

MELROSE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



Copyright

FORTESCUE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

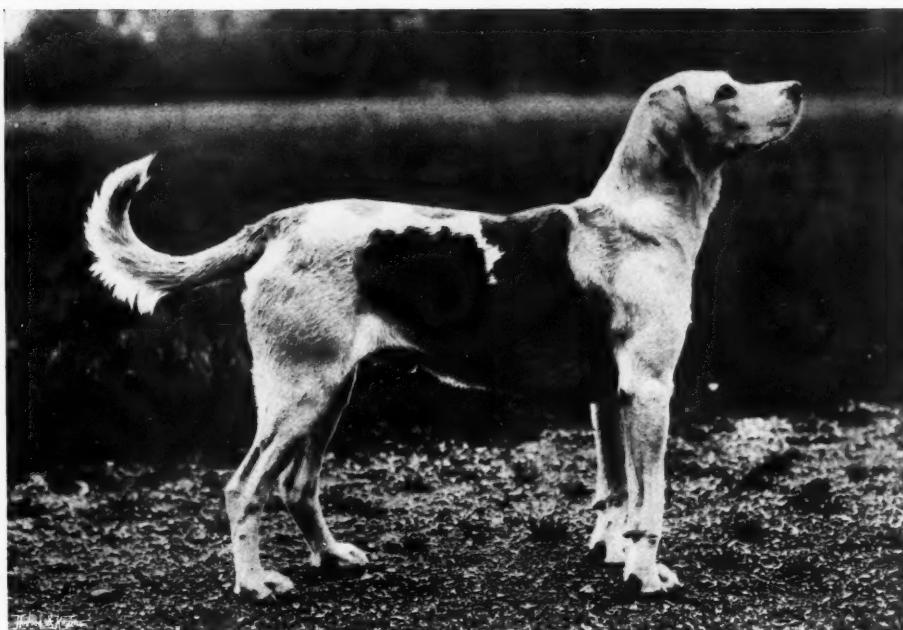
its character better than the Fitzwilliam. The long, sensible, hound-like head marks the race wherever we see them. This is well shown in the picture "On their Benches," a very typical group of Fitzwilliam heads. One could almost divine the glorious cry characteristic of the pack from looking at this picture. The hounds being unrounded makes the type of head more notable. We have already written of the music, which is so notable a quality of the Fitzwilliam, and is correlated with the fine gifts of nose which they have ever shown. The present pack is descended from those bred by one of the best of huntsmen and hound judges, Tom Sebright, to suit the country they hunted. The Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire sides of the country had more plough than than they have now. Like the rest of England, the Fitzwilliam country has an ever-decreasing area of arable. Yet to this day the Fitzwilliam is known as a light plough country, carrying an excellent scent in wet weather, but at times needing great patience in the huntsman and resolution in the hounds. Nowhere does the pack show to greater advantage than in the strong woodlands of the north of the country where it borders on the Cottesmore.

If we look at the portraits provided for us here, it will be easy to pick out the hounds of notable beauty and excellence. Fortescue is an extraordinarily well-shaped hound, with shoulders which any huntsman might envy, sufficient bone, and a look of quality no race-horse could surpass. He is the type of hound we should pick out as likely to be as good in work as in looks. Melrose, again, is a hound of great power, not, perhaps, with the beautiful quality of the other, but one that bears picking to pieces well. Harper has hardly done himself justice when standing for his portrait, but Potent may be commended to the notice of those who love a good fox-hound, even though his colouring may not be quite in the fashion. In the group with Anchorite we have Harper again, and this time he shows his type better, and we see that he is almost perfect in front.

From the portraits of the hounds we turn to those pictures which more particularly illustrate the life of the hounds. The attention of the reader may be drawn to the picture of the pack at exercise in the park, which tells a good deal. First of all it reminds us that these family packs have an immense advantage in the liberty of a fine park like Milton to exercise in. Next, that the pack is full of life, and we can see the beautiful light, free action of healthy, well-bred fox-hounds. Lastly, that the huntsman, Barnard, is on the best of terms with his pack, and has won their hearts. Then in the group of the hounds as a pack with their attendants, though the scale is small, we can see the level likeness of the pack, and infer, even if we are not able to visit the kennels for ourselves, that the hounds whose portraits we have referred to above are not merely picked favourites, but good types of the pack.

It is now five years since Mr. G. C. W. Fitzwilliam resumed the Mastership, and with Barnard, who had had a creditable career as whipper-in, set to work to restore the glories of the Hunt. The kennel management is excellent, as the hounds tell us. Hounds, even more than horses, tell tales of

those who have the care of them by their looks. No hounds could look better or move more freely than these. Though, like other packs, the Fitzwilliam began late, they have had a good cub-hunting season, and doubtless will repeat again some of the triumphs of the past. Mr. Fitzwilliam has never wanted for writers to tell of its glories. The Druid gave the Hunt some of his best pages, and, among other writers, the late Lord Desart wrote a spirited set of verses in *Baily* some years ago, in which he celebrated the feats of some of the hard-riding farmers who have been one of the glories of the Fitzwilliam. Some people seem to think that the Fitzwilliam is an easy country, and possibly it is not so severe on the nerves of man or the courage of the horse as some parts of its neighbours the Cottesmore and Pytchley. Yet it takes a very good man to go straight when the famous pack set the pace on a fine hunting day. Naturally, with the resources they have for hunting stout foxes in the woodlands of Lord Exeter, the Duke of Bedford, or Mr. O'Brien's excellent coverts at Blatherwyke, the Fitzwilliam often have long hunts of the sort it is usual to call old-fashioned, but which



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POTENT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

£5 cap is suggested. That, of course, means that the system has failed with them, or they think it has. Such a sum would, of course, be the *reductio ad absurdum* of all capping. Would it not be wiser to give the existing system a fair trial for a whole season? Then it is said that the Master is going to resign, but this I should be unwilling to put much faith in. Both Kirby Gate and Tilton Wood were fair average days, as far as sport is concerned, and the crowds were not perceptibly diminished by the terrors of the cap. I think, indeed, that the multitude who walk and drive was larger than ever, and quite as enthusiastic as usual, if one may judge from the shouts that rent the air every time a fox showed himself. Luckily there were, at least, two brace of foxes in the covert. One was killed in full view of the crowd, and another went away, giving the foot people a fine view of the opening scenes of the hunt. The fences were blind and the ground was deep. Not so deep, however, as the rides of Tilton or Skeffington on



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RINGLET AND RIGHTFUL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

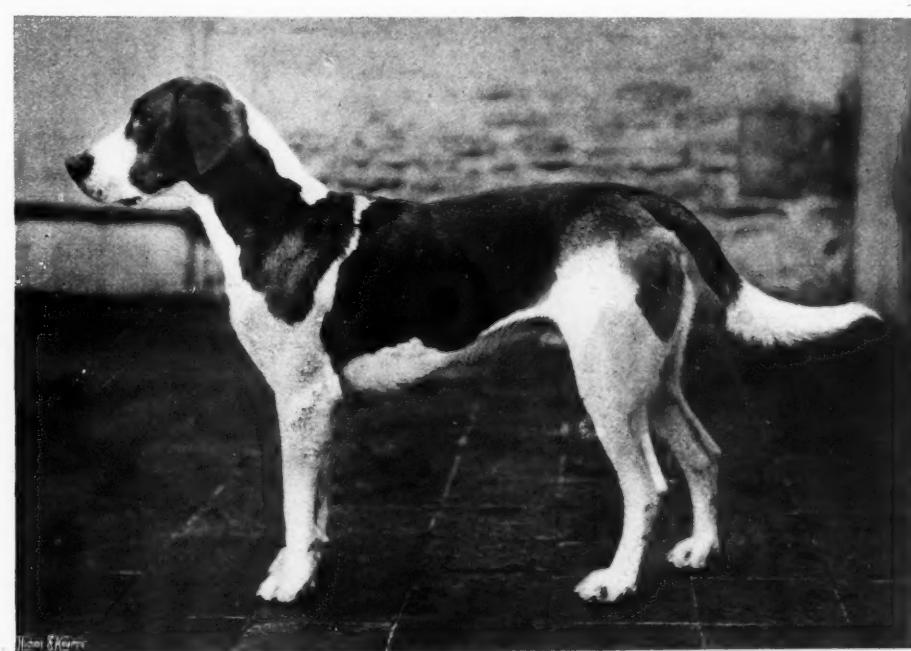
must always occur when a stout fox, a staunch pack of hounds, and a moderate scenting day come together. Long chases depend, too, on the condition of the hounds, and in this the Fitzwilliam are not likely to be wanting under their present huntsman.

the following day. Of the two days I enjoyed the Tuesday most, though, practically, about two or three miles from Tilton Wood was the limit of our

HUNTING NOTES.

A SHADOW has been cast over the opening season by the deaths of Lady Spencer and Lord William Bentinck. The former will always be recollected as the gracious hostess of Althorp, and the wife of one of the most respected and successful Masters of the Pytchley of our day. Her influence was always on the side of right, and few women have used a great position more for the benefit and happiness of others. The Pytchley meets have, of course, been postponed. Lady Spencer's death had been long feared and expected, but it came as a shock to everyone to hear of the death of Lord William Bentinck—a successful soldier, a hard rider, and the best man of his regimental (10th Hussars) polo team. Those who followed his work in South Africa know that had he been spared he had before him a future as a soldier.

There are rumours that the Pytchley are not satisfied with the result of the cap, and a



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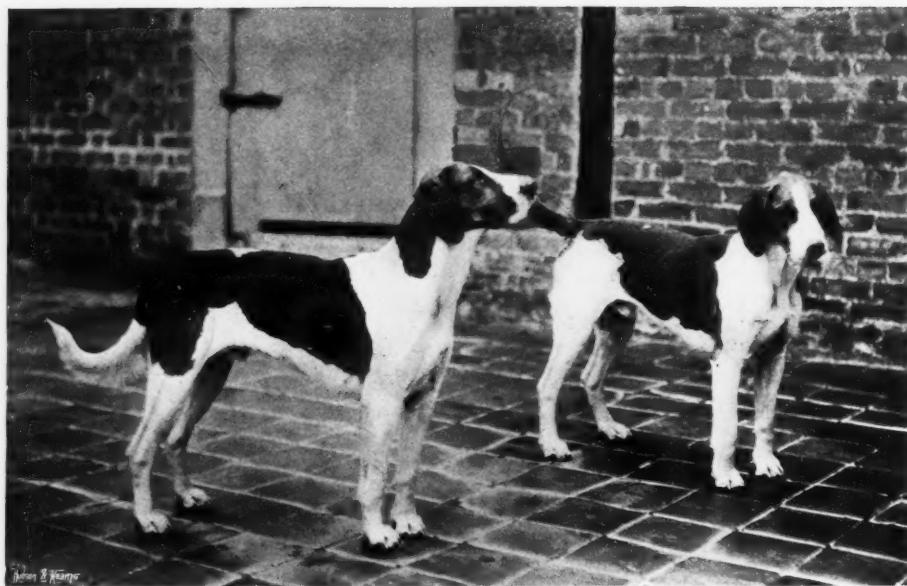
HARPER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

travels. But the hounds worked beautifully, and the fences and the state of the ground kept the field off their backs. I had hoped to visit the Belvoir at Croxton Park, but as business took me elsewhere, I will leave that famous pack until next week; but I heard on Friday that the Belvoir could do nothing. Scent was absent. The week, however, was marked by two gallops. My Cottesmore friend writes: "Those people who are always telling us that no hunt nowadays ever lasts more than a quarter of an hour, should have been at the Bull, Witham, last week. On Thursday Thatcher and his dog pack hunted a fox

for four hours, and were defeated after all, not, however, through any fault of either, but simply because the beaten fox took refuge in a wood full of other foxes. There, no doubt, he lay down because he could go no further. If a fox will only keep quiet he can always defeat hounds, as he has practically no scent when he lies quiet still. In the meantime the other foxes were running about all over the covert and effectually foiling the ground and distracting the hounds. The hunted fox, when I saw him, was unusually dark in colour, but that may have been from the muddy state of the ground. Though we never went very fast, as you may gather by the time—four hours—the chase lasted, yet I have not seen two horses so beaten as mine were. I do not think either of them will come out for a week. Yet if you look at the map it was nothing. Beaumont Wood is a small covert, comparatively. Witham Wood lies between it and the Belvoir boundary, and there are several coverts not very far off. The extent of the distance was Lawn Wood—not, of course, to be confounded with Launde Wood on the Leicestershire side—yet though we did not go very far we found ourselves hunting all day."

If you write about hunting you are almost bound to go to Kirby Gate, though I confess it is a day that gives me as little pleasure as a day with hounds can. The first Friday is altogether a different matter, and when it is celebrated by such a run as I am about to sketch, is delightful both for sport and society. Everybody was there. I need hardly write the old names, save to point out how wholesome a pastime hunting is. Do not the same people go on year after year? Sir Henry Rawlinson is staying at the Crown, Oakham, on leave, but he is too keen a soldier to stay with us the whole season. Sir R. Filmer is another soldier taking a holiday. Mr. Rupert Craven is a nephew of Lady Wilton's, and has settled down in rooms in Burton Street. Captain Forester has come back from Yorkshire. Cream Gorse held a fox, and for a time he played with hounds, dodging about covert. When he did go he took a splendid line. There is space for all in the spreading grass fields, with the trees of Ashby Pastures as a landmark. We are practically learning our country over again. The gap under the tree has been mended, the rails in the



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ANCHORITE AND HARPER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

corner are stouter, and the thin places in the hedges not so perceptible as they were last year, nor as they will be later in this. But then horses are fresh, and the young mare, after fighting for her head, flings herself almost savagely over the dark obstacles, and celebrates the moment when, as the pace mends and the hounds are not within dangerous distance, we ease the pressure by fairly bucking over a rail and nearly jumping off. Never mind, we shall be glad enough of those muscular quarters later. Even now the mare responds to a gentle pull as we leave Ashby Pastures untouched. The fox had apparently

thought of the New Plantation, but—and we see the advantage of drive in a pack—the hounds never gave him time to hang; if there is a refuge he dare not look for it. Yet he did not forget, for it was to this point he returned, and in the New Plantation that he escaped. In the meantime hounds are racing to the brook, carrying a good head, and hurling themselves at it, cross, and with scarcely a pause to shake the water from their coats, are on again to Barsby; but the fox had probably gained ground here, for he managed to turn, and, working gradually to the left, reached Ashby New Plantation and safety. Whether he slipped on or roused a substitute it would be difficult to say.

I regret to see announced the death of Captain Tyrrwhitt-Drake, a former Master of the Old Berkeley. There was no better sportsman than he, and he farmed 1,200 acres with considerable success in better times. His popularity was universal in Buckinghamshire. As became one of his name, he was an enthusiastic and successful hound-breed, with a great leaning towards the old Blankney blood. He had a lovely bitch pack, a trifle wild, but a driving, killing pack when they settled to work. All who hunted with him, or knew him, will regret one of the most deservedly popular Masters of Hounds of his day.

X.

GRINLING GIBBONS.

RECENTLY, when we illustrated and described Belton House, Lord Brownlow's beautiful seat near Grantham, we gave some account of the famous wood-carver, Grinling Gibbons, so much of whose work exists there. We are able to supplement our pictures by another from the same source even more characteristic of the master's style. The exquisite delicacy of the carving enables us to give credence to the legend told of Gibbons that



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AT EXERCISE IN THE PARK.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



when he lived in the vicinity of Ludgate Hill, he placed above his door a bunch of corn so naturally carved in wood that it waved in the breeze and trembled when vehicles passed by. In our new example of Gibbons's style there is a lightness of touch and a truth to Nature that are not surpassed anywhere. The ears of wheat, the snowdrops and other spring flowers, the grapes and various fruits, and the dead poultry and game possess extraordinary fidelity to their originals. In this example Gibbons surpassed himself. Alike in grouping and execution this framework is a masterpiece, and it ranks amongst the most treasured works at Belton. We can readily understand how John Evelyn, filled with the love of Nature, delighted in the carver's reproduction of natural things. There are two schools of thought upon the matter, and some will love the conventional, despite all the naturalistic triumphs of Gibbons. None, however, can fail to appreciate his wonderful and inimitable skill. We wonder whether the scene has ever been painted of John Evelyn discovering him at his work in his little room in old Deptford, or bringing Christopher Wren to behold it. If not, we commend the subject to our genre artists. It was Evelyn's admiration that founded the fame of Gibbons. Upon Wren he laid a behest that his *protégé* should be employed, and the great architect, never slow to recognise merit, gave the young carver much to do. St. Paul's is rich in his work, and wherever Wren went in



W. A. Roush. **CAPPA WHITE, WINNER OF THE JOCKEY CLUB PLATE.** Copyright

building houses, Gibbons appears to have followed. Hence it is that Belton House is so beautifully adorned.

Grinling Gibbons had followers and imitators, but perhaps only one approached him in skill. There has been much dispute as to whether the famous carvings at Chatsworth were his work or that of the local artist, Samuel Watson. Allan Cunningham says, "The birds seem to live, the foliage to shoot, the flowers to expand beneath your eye," just as they do at Belton, and as they might be expected to do in the work of Grinling Gibbons. And yet all documentary evidence goes to show that Watson was busily employed, and makes no mention of Gibbons, though many refuse to believe that any other hand than his could have wrought the marvels. At Heanor, a few miles from Belper, is a curious epitaph of Watson, seeming to imply that he had been neglected by Fame. It deserves to be quoted here:

" Watson has gone, whose skilful art displayed
To the very life, whatever Nature made.
View but his wondrous works in Chatsworth Hall,
Which are so gazed at and admired by all;
You'll say 'tis pity he should hidden be,
And nothing said to revive his memory.
" My mournful friends, forbear your tears,
For I shall rise when Christ appears!"

Therefore, perhaps, the name of Watson should be linked with that of Gibbons. Both worked in the same style, but,

while the former was employed, presumably, mostly in his own district, the carvings of Gibbons are in many parts of the land, and nowhere in greater perfection than at Belton House.

RACING NOTES.

THE most remarkable incident in the racing last week was its enforced postponement by a fog at Northampton. Consequently the second day's programme came off on Friday instead of Thursday, clashing with the first day at Lingfield. Perhaps the chief sufferer by the postponement was W. Lane, the jockey, as he rode at the southern meeting, and his understudy, Janek, scored the three successes which would otherwise have made his position as head of the winning jockeys tolerably safe. As it was, his one success at Lingfield places him two above Madden, his only real competitor. I have little to write about the racing at Birmingham, where the chief handicap was won by the Cambridgeshire disappointment, Cottager. He defeated a numerous field of very moderate quality, and, as he is owned by Sir W. Ingram and trained by W. Stevens, the victory was a popular one in the Midlands. Birmingham presents few attractions to the ordinary race-goer, but if the attendance, apart from that of the local patrons, was, as usual, almost confined to those who were directly interested in the results of the several races, the fields were numerous, and the general success must have been gratifying to the management.

The chief event, apart from the phenomenal fog, at Northampton was the Jockey Club Plate, in which Cappa White easily disposed of those two useful handicap performers, Scullion and McYardley. His last previous outing had been on the occasion of his running an indifferent third to Sceptre and Rock Sand in the Jockey Club Stakes at Newmarket, and as the mare was giving him 21lb. and the Derby winner met him at 18lb. worse terms than those prescribed by the weight for age scale, his success may tend to make hasty judges, who decry Rock Sand's pretensions to rank in the first class, reconsider their opinion. Friday saw Sir Blundell Maple's colours in front in four races out of the six, as he won three handicaps, the Nursery with Cragthorpe, and the other two with Bowery and Galloway, besides the Apprentices' Plate with Merry Saint. As the same owner won the Castle Ashby Handicap on Wednesday with Vidame, he will probably be on the side of the minority who would retain Northampton as a racing fixture.

Lingfield is usually associated with pleasant weather and numerous fields, and these were the chief characteristics of its last meeting. In spite of the unfortunate accident which placed it in competition with Northampton on Friday, riders were found for twenty juveniles in the November Nursery. Jarvis, the most successful apprentice entitled to the 5lb. allowance now riding, added to his already respectable score by winning it on an unnamed gelding trained in Fallon's stable, which is always dangerous at this time of the year. McIntyre, another apprentice who has before given proof of capacity, won the Yewhurst Welter Handicap from an equally large field on Mark Time, trained by Robinson, who has not had much luck this year, and who had just previously scored with Templemore, who was a useful horse last season, but had not previously earned a bracket in his present ownership. Another trainer who has had few turns of fortune is W. Stevens, whose stable provided two winners of handicaps in Ediclus and Tredegar on Saturday.

The Liverpool Cup will be decided the day after the publication of these notes. Burses has been made favourite, but, on their running in the Cesarewitch, there seems no reason why he should beat Grey Tick, and he cannot have much in hand with Happy Slave on the latter's bold show in the Duke of York Stakes. The house of Stanley is usually triumphant at Liverpool, and with Pellisson—on this, his favourite battle-ground—and Andrea Ferrara to represent it, I think it has every chance of adding another trophy to the family sideboard.

Counsels of prudence would defer the risk of making any selection for the Derby Cup until after the decision of the Liverpool race. It has a sufficiently open appearance, but, if I may hazard an opinion, I think it will probably be taken by a three year old, and among horses of that age entered General Cronje and Fariman appear to be the pick. The former has disappointed his supporters at Goodwood and Hurst Park, but his victors—or victresses—on those occasions, Lady Help and Muriel II., have both run well since, and as the weights have been raised sufficiently to allow him to have the assistance of Madden, he will probably once more start favourite.

KAPPA.

A LANCASTHIRE DUCK DECOY.

VEN in busy manufacturing Lancashire the art of the decoyman is not obsolete. There is, however, only one decoy now working in the county; it is situated on the Mersey Estuary between Widnes and Liverpool, far above the docks and shipping of the great port, but yet near enough to the smoky towns of Widnes, Runcorn, and Farnworth to make it exceedingly interesting. As one stands on the road, which, by the way, is only 200yds. away from the decoy, and looks across the marshy fields and wide river, the clustered chimneys of Weston Point and the masts and smoke-stacks of large craft in the Ship Canal and Weaver Navigation Docks appear on either side of the little wood which contains the decoy. Away to the left is Runcorn, no mean town, with its high-level railway bridge crossing the river to Widnes, and the pall of smoke that hangs still more to the eastward over Ditton and Farnworth makes a strange setting for the resort of wildfowl. All the large ocean-going vessels use the Ship Canal, which hugs the Cheshire side of the river, but panting tugs, dragging long trains of lighters and broad-beamed, flat-bottomed sailing craft, navigate the intricate channels between the sand-banks. No wonder that the fowl, which still come in some numbers to the estuary to feed by night on the banks and mud-flats, do not care to spend the day on the commerce-crowded, man-haunted river; no wonder that they seek this one secluded spot, seemingly so safe and free from the taint of their worst enemy.

The season for wildfowling was over when we visited Hale Decoy, so that we were able to thoroughly examine the pond and pipes, and to talk meanwhile. Had there been any wildfowl on the pond, we should have had to keep silence, to move with caution, and on no account to smoke, for it is most important to keep the birds from thinking that human beings ever visit the wood.

The decoy pond is within an isolated wood of Scotch firs, elms, and sycamores, standing in a field which but a few years ago was wild salttings; even now the tide comes up the muddy gutters, and fills the pond and moat, and the plants in the ditches—such, for instance, as scurvy grass and Alexanders—have a marsh-like appearance.

The decoy pond covers about an acre, and has five pipes, a number acknowledged by the best authorities to be most serviceable, for from whatever point of the compass the wind may blow, at least one of the pipes will be workable. The direction of the wind is one of the first considerations when snaring wildfowl, for when ducks rise they always turn head to wind; it is, therefore, better to work in a breeze, however slight, than in a dead calm,

for it is important to turn the birds in one direction, up the pipe, when they are being driven. In spite of the universal opinion that a duck decoy, to be of any use, must be remote from roads, the Hale Decoy is, as I have said, but 200yds. from the high road, and while we were in the quiet wood, thumping, buzzing motors passed, and the noise of carts and other vehicles was easily audible. To the south of the wood, some 400yds. or



T. A. Coward.

LOOKING UP THE PIPE.

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500yds. away, is the estuary; but that is comparatively quiet. Hale village, half a mile away, is a favourite resort of Liverpool cyclists, and at the week-end is crowded and somewhat noisy. Doubtless Hale Decoy benefits by being the one secluded spot in a busy district; there are no lakes or meres near where the fowl can be so completely shut off from the eyes of man. Here, though they may hear the clamour of distant commerce, they cannot see the enemy, for within the broad moat which wholly surrounds the wood is a great turf bank, planted with shrubs, which effectually hides the outer world from the inner, and *vice versa*. To the fowl on the pond the throb of the screw, the rumble of the wagon on the road, the hoot of the syren at Weston or the steam whistle at Widnes convey no terrors; they know they are sounds and nothing more. The dreaded thunder of the punt-gun, the crack of the shoulder-gun, even the whisper of human voices, sounds which they associate with trouble, are never heard within their little wood. It must be safe here. Yet do they never question what has become of that party of their companions who swam with such apparent confidence up one of those pipes, and never returned? No, that is it; they never do return to warn their fellows. Liverpool Market is the destination of that party, but never more Hale Decoy.

Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey, who wrote the interesting "Book of Duck Decoys," had evidently never seen the Hale Decoy, or he would have given a more detailed description, for it undoubtedly differs in many particulars from the typical decoy. The wood is an irregular pentagon, planted to suit the five pipes which end at each angle. A five-piped decoy is often likened to the shape of a star-fish, a good simile if each of the arms of the animal is twisted to the right. In the centre is the pond, a shallow quiet sheet of water, almost stagnant, and decidedly brackish, which is fed at spring tides by a gutter which dips under the moat by means of a siphon. Excess rain-water and the returning tide escape by the same passage, so that an even level is maintained. Radiating from the pond are the wide-mouthed, ever-narrowing pipes, covered with tarred rope-netting,



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WATCHING DUCKS THROUGH THE SPYHOLES.

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LOOKING DOWN THE PIPE.

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stretched across iron hoops; the curve of the pipe is sufficient to hide the end from birds on the water. A series of overlapping tarred wood screens, some 6ft. in height, line the convex edge of the pipe, so arranged that anyone can walk along the pathway outside the screens and neither see the pond nor be seen by the ducks, though at the end of each screen he can obtain a view up the pipe. In every screen there is a little eyehole, through which the decoyman can glance to see if the ducks are coming up the pipe; at the end, or "breast-wall screen," one roughly at right angles to the others, he can see the whole of the pond through the slits.

The total length of the pipes, including the net at the end, is some 70yds., and for the first 45yds. to 50yds., so far, in fact, as the screens extend, the netting only covers the top of the pipe. Beyond that, well round the curve, is a wholly enclosed tunnel, extending to the end of the gutter; beyond this, again, is stretched, on six circular cane rings, a detachable net. A grass-grown pathway runs right round the decoy, and other pathways lead down to the head of each pipe. As it is absolutely necessary that the footfall of the decoyman should not be heard by the ducks, a gutter or ditch is provided along the inner side of the pathway, into which dead leaves and broken twigs can be brushed. The fowl which visit the decoy are night-feeders, leaving the decoy in a body at dusk and returning at dawn to spend the day in security; thus all brushing up of leaves, repairs, or "feeding the banks" is performed at night. In summer, the winter's accumulation of dead leaves and rotting vegetation can be raked out of the ditches, gutters, and pipes.

A deep and wide moat surrounds the wood to keep off trespassers or straying cattle, and at one place only it can be crossed by a swing bridge, a heavy plank, which, when not in use, can be securely locked on the landward side. Where the path from the bridge crosses the high bank a broad screen of black canvas is erected to hide the decoyman from the birds. Inside the wood, too, is a little hut, where food—offal, wheat and oats, and Indian corn—is stored, and where rakes, nets, and other weapons of the trade can be kept; and a carefully-hidden boathouse, up a short bent waterway, completes the furniture of the decoy.

In most other English decoys all the screens are made of reeds, firmly lashed together by tarred twine, while reed-beds are allowed to grow along the margin of the pool to provide shelter for the birds. At Hale there are no reeds, so wood is substituted, and apparently is quite as serviceable. In reed screens the spy-holes are formed by the insertion of a movable lath, which, when in use, can be turned edgeways; but here, again, the permanent tiny openings, little bigger than the slit in a penny-in-the-slot machine, do quite as well. Fowl require somewhere where they can sit and rest, doze, dry their feathers, and preen themselves. For this purpose, "landings,"

known as the "breast-wall" and the "backwing" landing, are generally provided outside the mouth of the pipe; at Hale the banks are carefully bushed with dead thorn boughs between each pipe, and no landing is supplied except on either side, within the "draught" or beneath the netting of the pipe.

A low screen, between 2ft. and 3ft. in height, runs across the "show place," or opening at the overlapping end of each screen; this is called the "dog-jump," for over this "the piper" or decoy dog is taught to leap. The dog at Hale does not jump, for in each of the low wooden screens there is a little trap-door; the dog slips through the doors, which the decoyman leaves open.

The general idea of decoying ducks is to entice them up one of these pipes until they are a little way from the mouth, and then to drive them into the bag at the end by the decoyman showing himself behind them at one of the show places. A number of call ducks are kept on the pond; these first attract the attention of any passing wildfowl, and also assist in

the luring process later on, giving a lead to the wild birds by swimming up the pipes. "Feeding" and "dogging" are the two methods by which the birds are enticed into the pipes; if the birds are hungry, feeding will attract them, but if that fails, the use of the piper generally results in a catch. The decoyman at Hale spreads a good quantity of corn on the bank of the pipe opposite to the screens, and thus induces the birds to rest there, but if feeding is to be successfully carried out, too much food must not be given, for unless hungry the decoy ducks will not lead the others up the pipe when the decoyman throws food into the water over the top of the screens.

"Dogging" is the most interesting process, and as the general method is the same in both cases, it is unnecessary to describe "feeding" in detail. Jess, the Hale piper, is a light brown, half-bred Irish terrier, an intelligent but somewhat sedate little dog. The orthodox piper should be as like a fox as possible, and especially should have a good brush. The stump of a tail, which Jess can scarcely wag, is as unlike a brush as anything could be; in fact, Jess bears no resemblance to a fox, and yet she does her work very well. Ducks, like sheep and cattle, are very inquisitive; when they see any strange creature, so long as it is not chasing them, they will always try to obtain further information about it, and if it runs away from them will follow it, possibly thinking that they are chasing an intruder from the field—or pond. In ordinary cases the piper jumps over the first or "head show," frisks about a bit, and jumps back over the next dog-jump, repeating the process from jump to jump all the way up the pipe. Jess is, however, slipped through the trap-door, and comes out by the first trap she finds open, returning for directions between each little excursion. If necessary, she is sent further up the pipe, entering at one hole and coming out at the next.

The decoyman made Jess perform for us, and very interesting



T. A. Coward.

THE FATAL END.

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it was. Immediately she was signed to enter, she ran in and went to the edge of the water, where for a second or two she glanced round the pool; this our guide told us was her usual custom. Then she turned, and with a most casual gait, trotted up the turf at the edge of the pipe until she found a door open; bolting through the opening, she ran back, outside the screens, to her master, who rewarded her by giving her a morsel of some favourite food. She was a little put out when she noticed that there were men watching her come up the pipe, and the click of the camera shutter made her start; it was quite contrary to her ideas of what was right to see anyone in front of her when she was at her business.

When the ducks see the dog come to the water's edge their curiosity is excited, and when the strange animal turns away and disappears suddenly they cannot resist the temptation to investigate matters; they, therefore, often led by the decoy birds, who associate the sight of the dog with their food-supplying master, swim for a short distance up the pipe. Then the dog appears again beyond them, and once more is lost to their view; on they go, and when they are just beginning to feel anxious, the decoyman suddenly shows himself at the head show. At once the birds rise, turning head to wind up the pipe, for the decoyman has carefully selected the pipe with the wind blowing down; they see a long curving pipe in front of them, they know there is a hated man behind, who by now has raced to a nearer show place, and is vigorously waving a red handkerchief. What must they do? There is hope of escape up the pipe, but none, they think, if they turn and fly towards their arch-enemy; so away they go into the tunnel, followed by the chasing monster, who now thrashes the top of the netting with his handkerchief, but never utters a sound, until they are driven into the circular closed net at the end. The decoyman runs to the string that attaches the net to the end of the pipe, pulls the loop loose that holds it, seizes the end cane, and gives the net a twist; the birds, struggling and panting in the confined area, are at his mercy. Too terrified to call, they are dragged out one by one, and with a dexterous twist their necks are dislocated.

Only surface-feeding ducks are captured at Hale; pochards and tufted ducks, though common on many of the Lancashire and Cheshire waters, and even in the estuaries, do not seem to visit the decoy. Records of the daily catches are registered in the decoy book, which has been kept since 1801, although the entries between 1825 and 1875 are considered unreliable. The annual catch is much the same as in early years; there seems no diminution in the total, though there is considerable variation in the numbers of the different species taken. A few widgeon and an occasional shoveller are captured, but in the early-recorded years mallard were the most abundant birds. From 50 to 200 teal were taken yearly between 1801 and 1825, though once or twice only a few odd birds were captured, and one year—1820—not one was recorded. In 1875, however, the register shows that teal had become more abundant, as many as 700 being sometimes obtained, while mallard began to be scarce, and often only 50 or 60 were snared. Within the last few years mallard, although fairly plentiful on the Mersey sand-banks, have been seldom captured, but pintails have become regular visitors; teal, however, keep up in numbers, and are the most profitable birds; several times over 100 have been crowded in the fatal bag at a single drive, and once, the decoyman tells us, 136 was the number of the catch. It is worth noting that, though on most other decoys such vast catches are not made now as were formerly obtained, at Hale the returns keep steady.

The art of duck decoying by enticing the birds is not very ancient; it was introduced from Holland about the middle of the seventeenth century. Duck traps, into which birds were driven, were known long before this, but they were very different from the Dutch decoys. It is interesting to know that in the neighbouring county of Cheshire there was a decoy at Dodleston, near Chester, in existence earlier than any recorded by Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey. It is mentioned in Sir William Brereton's "Travels in Holland, etc., " and, according to his description, was similar to the coys he saw when in that country in 1634.

T. A. COWARD.

IN THE GARDEN.

THE BROWN TURKEY FIG.

A WET and dreary summer and steamy autumn have not proved congenial to the Fig, but we have just gathered from a sunny corner a few of the luscious fruits, which are only satisfactory when gathered from the tree and eaten at once. Figs travel badly; the fruit should be eaten as the Jargonelle should be, and that is as soon as it is gathered. The finest fruits of Brown Turkey we have ever seen were grown by the Marquess of Salisbury's excellent gardener, Mr. G. Norman, at Hatfield. They were of enormous size, but also of excellent quality. We were interested in fruits so handsome and luscious, and discovered that they were from trees planted out under glass. A well-known grower of Figs sends the following instructive remarks (he is writing of Brown Turkey in particular): "This variety will crop several times, but it stands to reason that if a tree is allowed to produce three, or even two, crops of fruit it must be weakened, and the wood has a

shorter time to mature and rest. Another point necessary to secure fine fruits is to allow ample room for the growths, and to be careful in stopping the new wood. Many crops fail owing to the wood being allowed free play for too long, with the result that the fruit drops freely at the finishing stages. It is sometimes recommended that the trees be allowed to crop freely to reduce gross growth, but frequently such varieties as Negro Largo, Grosse Monstreuse, Nubian, and Gouraud Noir fail to give a heavy crop if planted out, even when given every care in culture, and are much more trustworthy in pots. These varieties I have referred to on account of their flavour, and another fine variety, Bourgasote Grise, should be in all collections; it is of excellent quality, and also crops freely. There is no better time than the autumn to get pot trees for another season and to thoroughly ripen the wood by free exposure. The latter remark also applies to trees planted out under glass that have borne a crop. By the timely thinning out of useless wood, and weak, spray-like growth, on which next season's crop will be produced, finer fruit will be formed, and there will be fewer failures through dropping."

SPIREA ANTHONY WATERER.

This is well known by name to many, but few seem to have it in their gardens, if one may judge from the places we have visited during the past few weeks, and it is at this time that the Spirea makes its strongest appeal. Flowers in hedgerow and woodland have given place to ruddy fruits, but this Spirea is in full beauty, not a mere scattering of crimson flower-heads over the bushy growth, but a full abundance of blossom, giving the same beautiful note of colour as the Alport Heath, which purples the garden with its misty cloud of flowers. S. Anthony Waterer is a sport from S. japonica, or callosa as it is also called; it originated in the nursery of Mr. Anthony Waterer at Knaphill, Woking, hence the name, but we are told that the sport occurred also in other places. The study of sports is full of interest; it is strange that at the same time, but in districts widely separated, a plant will give off a flower of identical colouring and form. Many instances occur of this happening with Roses and Chrysanthemums, but it is not frequent in the case of trees and shrubs. S. Anthony Waterer is quite a bush, vigorous in growth, and exceptionally free flowering; it begins to flower in June and continues until the frost. We noticed a row of it hundreds of yards long recently in Messrs. Fisher, Son, and Sibray's nursery at Handsworth; this line of soft colouring was very beautiful on a warm September morning. There is nothing like it for the autumn, and it is in the group that the colouring is most effective.

CRABS WITH BEAUTIFUL FRUITS.

We have lately received a boxful of the John Downie Crab; it is not a large Crab, but a neat and pretty little fruit of a crimson colour, and, unlike many fruits, quite pleasant to the taste. In one large group at the recent Fruit and Vegetable Show at Chiswick the piles of Apples and Pears were strung together, so to say, with this Crab, which is so free in bearing that the graceful branches bend with their ruddy burden. It is a tree for the lawn, shrubbery, and orchard. Planters of gardens seldom think of these lovely ornamental Crabs. They are a picture of colouring, not only in autumn, but when veiled in flowers in spring, and in some kinds the leaves change from the green of summer to brown and scarlet shades that are almost as bright as the colouring of the fruit. The Dartmouth Crab is larger and darker in colour. Mr. George Bunyard, writing in "The Century Book of Gardening" about these Crabs, makes the following interesting observations: "For early spring blossom and autumn fruit combined, there are no better subjects than the John Downie and Dartmouth Crabs. The former is best as a standard, as its numerous long, oval fruits cause the tree to weep, and when ripe, in September, they present a rich appearance, as the tree bears profusely. The Dartmouth Crab is better as a pyramidal tree, when it should be pruned hard for two or three years, and then be allowed to extend itself. The fruits are large, and assume a dark Mulberry colour when ripe, covered with a dense bloom. They are handsome on the trees, as also when used for table decoration."

RANDOM NOTES.

A Japanese Vine for its Autumn Colours.—We received several leaves of this vine (*Vitis Thunbergi*) to show the splendour of their autumn colourings. One of the leaves measured over a foot in length and almost as much in width, and was of an intense crimson, with occasional shades of deep yellow. No vine is more glorious in autumn than this, and those who have not planted it on pergola or arch should do so. It is impossible to convey in words the effect of its enormous leaves in autumn; the whole of the foliage turns to these brilliant shades. *V. Coignetiae* also turns to a self deep crimson, but with us its leaves are not so large. Many Japanese vines have been introduced of late years, but we shall have to wait for these until they become more common. Meanwhile, with *V. Thunbergi*, *V. Coignetiae*, and the pretty clinging purple-leaved *purpurea*, our wants are quite satisfied. *V. purpurea* is rarely seen, though it is in its colouring more distinct than any, but we presume that, being an old garden climber, it suffers from the thirst for mere novelty.

A Late-flowering Funkia.—It is always well to know the names of plants that flower late in the year, as well as those that reach perfection in spring and in summer. There was at Kew a few days ago a rare Funkia named *tardiflora* in flower, and it is worth knowing this, as it blooms naturally at this late season. The leaves are of that beautiful greyish colour we associate with *F. ovata*, the most popular of the Plantain Lilies, and from this clustering of foliage emerge many stems of flowers, which are individually of somewhat tubular shape, and white. A group of this Funkia at the head of some mixed border or on the rock garden would make a pleasant October picture.

Shrub Notes Continued.—The last shrub mentioned in the select list, which is so difficult to keep within the desired limits, was *R. phoenicolasius*, the Japanese Wine Berry, but among the Rubi there are also the double white and pink Brambles to mention, which are of wild and picturesque growth, and exactly suit certain somewhat unkempt corners, where spreading flowery growths are desired.

A New Strawberry.—It is always a pleasure to record the arrival of a new fruit, especially when it possesses some unusual virtue. For this reason we draw attention to a variety called The Roydon, which has become famous for the excellent reason that it bears freely in autumn. On September 29th

last the plants were bearing plentifully fruit both ripe and in various stages of development; the colour is deep crimson and the flavour is excellent. It is a good Strawberry in every way, strong, of excellent quality, and rich in colour.

The Tree Ivy in Flower.—As we wandered in a Berkshire lane in early October, warm sun casting softened shadows across the path, a pleasant growth broke in on a hedgerow of Bramble and wild Rose, and this growth was the Tree Ivy, which had thrust everything aside for several yards. It was in flower, a dense massing of globular yellow heads which sent out a sweet but nutty scent into the crisp air. The hedgerow was yellow with the flowers, and hundreds of bees were busy sipping the last nectar of the waning year. This flowering of the Tree Ivy has taught us a lesson that has

not of much account, but they are produced in a graceful way, and have a lilac tinge which is not unpleasant. It is, of course, the leaves that are the chief attraction. When bruised they give off a warm spicy scent, not unlike the fragrance of the Verbena, and hence, we presume, the origin of the English name.

A LOWLAND STREAM.

ORD BEACONSFIELD, whose observation of Nature was so keen, though erratic, says in one of his novels

that the sound made by water always has a tendency to send one to sleep. No doubt that is true, even of the very loud streams. There is a little brawling one in the North, where, in days gone by, I used to fish, and it is always making such a turmoil as it dances and sparkles over the stones, and forms runs and waterfalls and cascades, that an angler on one side can scarcely make himself heard by his friend on the other. Yet anyone resting on a summer day on the banks of that noisy water is almost sure to be lulled into sleepiness, even if he does not go fast asleep, as occurred once to a friend of the writer's, the late W. E. Henley. His lameness had always prevented him from watching sport, to say nothing of partaking in it, and he wished to see some trout caught. The fish were taken, but ere that was accomplished the distinguished poet was, as he himself said, "sleeping like a tired child." I have often noticed that even the water of a garden fountain has a similar effect, perhaps owing to the ideas of peace and tranquillity which it suggests.

In the low-lying fields of the South the rivers make no noise, yet the very sight of them, flowing so softly among the green meadows, suggests the idea of rest, at least to middle age. One who happened to be born beside such a quiet stream as is shown in these pictures associates it in his memory with almost ceaseless activity. There were early days when the two great mysteries of life were the whence and whither of this stream, and it is pleasant yet to think of the pilgrimages made to explore its source and mouth. Many attempts were made in vain, for the river itself offered continuous temptations to linger, and as resolution was not numbered among the qualities possessed by the boy in question, it took about a hundred starts before one was carried through to the end. They were usually made in pleasant spring weather, when there is a natural



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A BEND IN THE STREAM.

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remained too long unheeded, and that is the importance of the Tree or Bush Ivies, as we are wont to call them in garden language, in the shrubbery and woodland. The Bush Ivies are the most beautiful of evergreens; they are green the whole year, and when their burst of yellow has gone there still remain the glossy leaves, which seem to glisten in the weak winter sun, and the black berries, which follow the yellow flowers. We shall plant more Bush Ivies.

The Sweet Verbena (Aloysia citriodora).—In the gardens of Gunton Park, near Cromer, this fragrant-leaved plant is quite happy, but it is protected in winter with a single covering, such as one would give the Ceanothus and many tender shrubs in the Midlands and further north. Two bushes were several feet high and flowering delightfully. The flowers are

propensity on the part of all animated life to ramble. The wild things of field and hedgerow feel it as much as the migrating birds, and no doubt if men and women had not for so many generations lived the artificial life of town and city, they, too, would wander forth in pairs over the field what time the first cuckoo is heard in the glade and the nightingale begins to twitter in the bush. And so when the days lengthened it always used to occur to me to go and seek out the source of the stream. But, then, at that time the moorhen was beginning to build in the rustling dried flags of last year or under the willows. The water-voles, too, seemed to love to come out

then. Sometimes, too, a very mild day would come, and the pools would be too alluring to pass. Then, though the stream itself was not a large one, several similar streams run into it, and they were even more interesting than it, since in a smaller compass they gave one a chance of catching any unfortunate trout that were to be seen. Occasionally, too, a great pike that had come up to spawn was found marooned in a pool, and it usually took the whole of a long exciting day to get that on to the grass by the *force majeure*, though the darkness frequently came with it still at large, leaving it an object for the next day's ambition.

On the tiny streams, too, it was possible to make dams. Indeed, many of them were already made by the shepherd who, in this way, formed a pool where his flock could drink. Of course, no healthy boy could resist the temptation of breaking down the dam to see the waters flood the narrow channel, and having broken it down, it was equally his delight to mend it and see the waters gathering again. Moreover, by one of these streams there was a regular stonework cauld erected to form a pond, with a sluice-gate to it, driving a thrashing-machine by water-power. It was a very primitive sluice-gate,

and two fairly strong boys could open it, to the great indignation of the farmer, who used to go popping about on an old grey horse. It generally happened, when the great wheel had been set in motion and the machinery started by two mischievous urchins, that he came in sight, and the chase that followed was almost as good as a fox-hunt, though he was handicapped somewhat by the fact that his nag was not a fencer. On the other hand, he kept the balance even by saving up what he had intended to give.

At any rate, a visit to the farm usually ended the day's pilgrimage.

Further up still there were the ruins of one of those curious old mills of which one can see the remains in various parts of the country. It must have been small, because, according to modern notions, the stream is quite inadequate. Only there might have been once something in the nature of a reservoir. And another point one did not notice then is that no high road comes at all near this mill, nor is there in any old map of the county any trace of one having approached it. Thus it is evident that the corn was brought to it on horseback, a sack at each side, one balancing the other. No doubt it was used chiefly



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BY THE POLLARDS.

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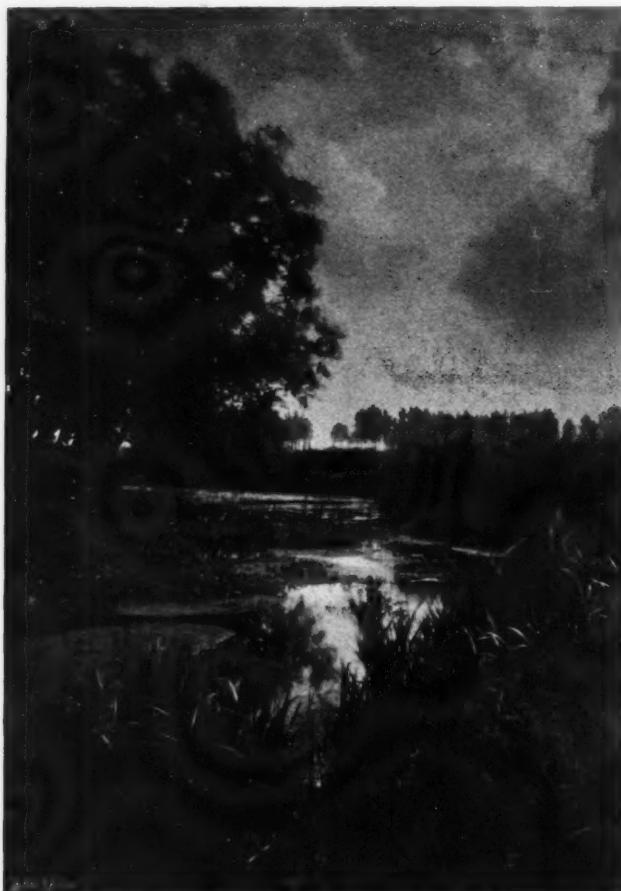
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SILENT AND SILVERY.

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by the small yeomen who could not have had more than five or six acres in cereal cultivation at the same time, and who, even in my own recollection, thrashed their corn with flails, or, as Burns called them, "flingin' trees." At one of the homesteads which is still standing, although the farm itself has been engulfed in one of the large holdings now prevalent, there is a barn with the raised floor on which the corn was thrashed by the flail. It is a curious fact, too, that in this barn there is a fireplace, with plenty of evidence that people had lived in the granary, and the tradition goes that the usual thing was for one of the labouring men and his wife to inhabit the barn. That is interesting, because it carries us back to a much older state of things, when, for instance, the author of "Hosebanderie" says of the shepherd that he shall sleep in the fold, he and his dog, and of the cowman, he shall sleep in the byre, and of the ploughman, he shall sleep in the stable. There would not, therefore, be anything contrary to farm tradition in the fact of a labourer sleeping in a barn.

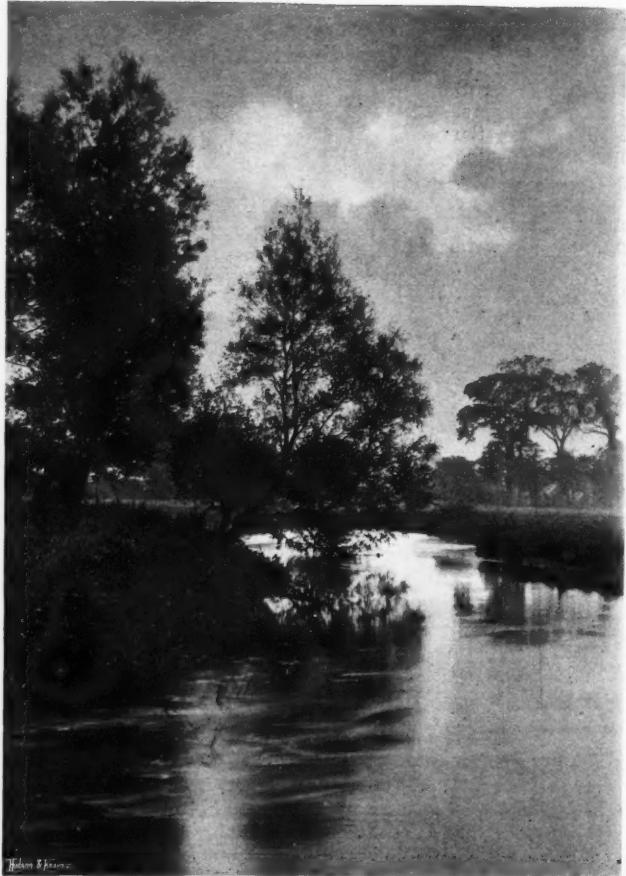
All this, of course, is a digression. The boyish reason for visiting this place had nothing to do either with antiquity or the history of agriculture. It lay in the fact that the water before it came to the wheel ran down a covered channel like a tunnel. Now the upper end of this was protected by a close grating, and it was a habit of the rats that infested the ruins—and they were little else—to enter the mouth of this tunnel, probably for the purpose of picking up any garbage that had been floated down. It formed an excellent natural trap. When an urchin put his head in at the lower end of the tunnel, the rat had no possible means of escape, and he seemed generally to know that the grating prevented his egress in that direction. Over the scenes that followed it may be well to draw a veil, except for one fact that never gets out of my memory: it is that a large old rat, when cornered and apparently doomed, attacked me with the pluck and vigour of a little terrier, and though he got the worst of the encounter, he made his name respected. Thus the business of exploration was a very slow one, because these were only a small number of the places that had to be visited each time, and night had a curious habit of coming on too soon, so that two or three years elapsed before one had got more than two or three miles from home. Nevertheless, the portion done was explored very thoroughly, and the progress, if slow, was full of adventure. But what was really found at the end of the journey, and what the stream was in its early infantile slender stages, we must leave for description on some future occasion. This is the more desirable, inasmuch as the photographs that we give are those of a more or less mature rivulet where there is a considerable body of water. Some day we hope to show pictures



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MEANDERING.

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Hensler. OVERSHADOWING THE STREAM. Copyright

of the brook in its first stage, where it is but a slender rivulet, glancing down from the mountains past fern and bracken and gorse, aglow for miles in the month of May with something of the charm of infancy in the unstained purity of its waters.

. . . *PAN, . . .*
THE RUSH-PIPE MAN.

GREAT events spring from small beginnings. Geraldine dated the fact of her friendship with the rush-pipe man from the evening when she was sent to bed an hour earlier than usual for calling Eustace "base liar and reprobate." This, in spite of her own and Eustace's explanation that the words had been used in a play-acting sense. Though she neutralised the punishment by getting up an hour sooner the next morning, the injustice of it rankled in her mind, and she ate her bread and milk, a rebel at heart, railing against law and authority. The only cure for this feeling is a good tramp. Eustace followed her in silent sympathy when he saw her run down the garden, jump over the gate, and set off up the road at the rate of five miles an hour. It was in the Easter holidays, and the girls might go where they liked if a brother went with them.

"Where are you going, what are you going to do?" he asked pantingly, as he caught her up.

"You can come if you like, but I am going just where I choose," said Geraldine with emphasis.

"All right," answered Eustace. Presently Geraldine's brow relaxed. "I am going there," she said, pointing over the valley to the top of a steep chalk hill.

"How jolly! But you have to go miles and miles round."

"I do not mean to; I am going quite straight, and I don't care if it is through private ground or not."

Barbed wire was unknown in that part of the country in those days, but to keep her word Geraldine had to wriggle through many a prickly hedge, white with wild fruit blossom. The hill had to be climbed on hands and knees, with the help of a short pointed stick in each hand, to prevent them from slipping. On the top grew a belt of fir trees, and nestling in natural furrows were bushes of furze and juniper.

The children ran up and down the broken ground until they came to a pond, when they threw themselves down on the top of the turfen bank, glad to stretch themselves after their stiff

scramble. Near the water a man sat plaiting green rushes. He looke i up, and his eyes were so blue they took away the breath of the beholders. In after days, when portraits of their various friends were painted by the children in the nursery, the rush-pipe man was a favourite subject, for two dabs of ultramarine in any outlined head made a faithful picture, easily recognised. In looking at the eyes no one noticed the impudent nose or long upper lip beneath it. There was silence as the children watched his deft fingers, and he smiled at their torn and earth-stained clothes.

"You have brought your sister up a rough way," he said at last to Eustace.

"I brought myself," said Geraldine; "and please would you tell me what you are making out of the rushes?"

He answered "pipes," and she thought he meant the musical kind. "Then your name ought to be Pan."

"Pan or Pat, it's all the same to me. I sell them for a penny a-piece," he said, referring to the pipes.

(Afterwards when Pan used to pass their home, the children would buy these pipes, monstruities a yard long with a bowl as large as a breakfast-cup, useless toys, yet for some reason liked by the children, who wondered at their mother for preferring Pan's bouquets of wild flowers, for to them wild flowers not picked by themselves had lost all charm.) "I know your voices," continued the man. "Are not you the children who in summer hang a basketful of posies over the wall with 'Please take one' written on it? I have often had a clove for my buttonhole out of that basket."

Geraldine was delighted, for the cloves were out of her garden. "It is part of a game of ours," she explained. "Once a person was greedy, and took the lot; then Alan wanted to put a nettle into each bunch, on the chance of the same person coming again." After this exchange of confidences, friendship grew apace, for when kindred spirits meet they are friends, irrespective of time or age. Pan was a friend worth knowing. In his company earth and water became alive with things grotesque and beautiful. Together they watched floating water-boatmen rowing themselves with their middle pairs of legs; beetles that danced, and insects that ran, on the surface of the pond. Pan fished up a water-scorpion, and held it in his hand. The hideous creature did not bite, but, opening its muddy-hued covering, showed a gleam of gauzy underwings and an orange-coloured body before it flew away, looking, as its captor said, "real handsome," and he added, "It's the same with women; it's wonderful what a bit of colour does to the creatures." Then, aware of hunger, these friends shared their lunch together. Geraldine unpocketed six cracknels, somewhat crumbled by their journey; Eustace pulled out a large piece of preserving sugar—it was grey with age, having been extracted from the pan in marmalade-making time; Pan contributed bread and cheese. He had made himself a sort of cupboard in the bank under an overhanging furze bush; out of this he drew half a cocoanut-shell. He knew where to find the spring that fed the pond, and he gave the children ice-cold water to drink. They sat eating hunks of bread and cheese, too young

to know, but not to feel, the charm of their surroundings that made it the most delicious lunch they had ever eaten. A breeze fanned their cheeks and swayed the tops of the fir trees together, as though they were whispering secrets one to the other. The faintest shade of blue tinged the sky, and the distant range of hills looked silver-grey; every colour that decks young spring is soft and tender.

After a time the rush-pipe man offered to take them home a new way, so they set off. They had hurried to reach the hill-top, but now they lingered at leisure. Pan once more proving a man of resources, to prevent Geraldine from tripping over her



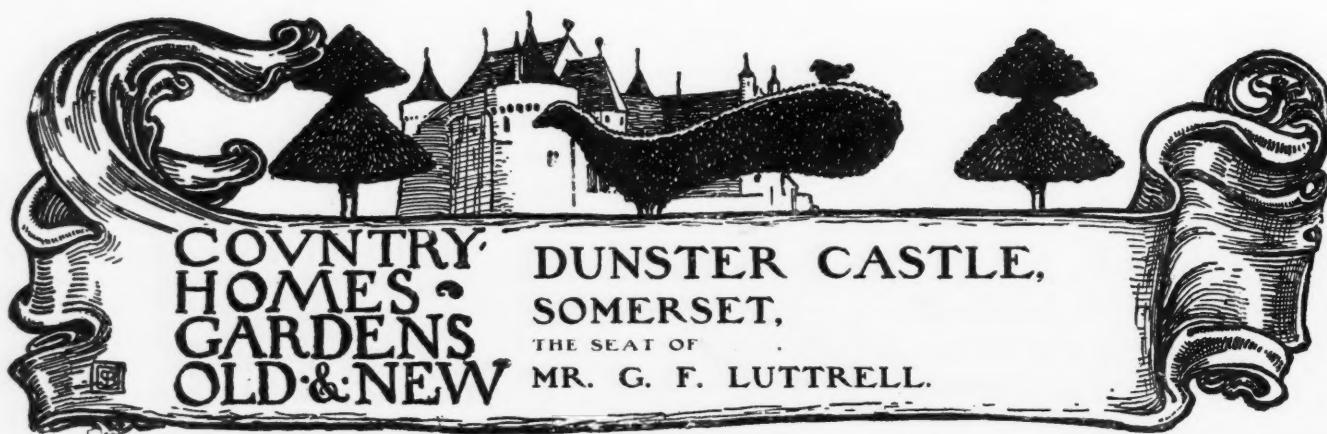
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LOWLAND STREAM: A REFLECTION.

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torn flounces, he pinned them up with thorns from a bush. He took them down a dell so narrow, that dew-drenched flowers and grasses still bent their heads, drowsily waiting for the sun to wake them. Here they found huge white-shelled snails that Pan said met with a ready sale when he took them up to London, so the children helped collect them for his basket. "There is always a something," said Pan, with contentment. "If it's not snails, it's flowers, or blackberries, or nuts, or mushrooms, or—" A goldfinch twittered close by; Pan looked meaningfully at it, but ended his sentence with "anything."

W. S.



THE ancient and picturesque village of Dunster, in Somerset, and the venerable castle which has looked over it for ages from the hill, constitute together one of the most interesting scenes which we could find in all the beautiful West of England. Somerset is rich in historic and legendary attraction, and full of loveliness; but in the region where Dunster lies, between the Brendon Hills and the Bristol Channel, with the heights of the Quantocks on the east, and the mighty bulk of Croydon and Grabbist Hills, the brown majesty of Dunkery Beacon, and the rough edges of Exmoor on the west, the country assumes the character of a real enchantment. Here one of the most powerful comrades of the Conqueror established himself and his family in great feudal state; here still stands the strong fortress in which they dwelt; here are the forests in which they hunted; here was the port from which their ships put to sea; and here were the religious foundations and the civil liberties established by the bounty of their hands. The Muse of History might well proclaim from these venerable walls the story of our feudal England; of the

rise and power of the baronage; the slow emancipation of the people; the courage of men; the devotion of women; the virtues that spring from the soil.

Happily in our account of Dunster we have to guide us the learned pen of Sir Maxwell Lyte, whose long researches into the annals of the castle are a true monument of ancient greatness. The natural mound upon which the fortalice stands was called before the Conquest by the familiar West Country name of Torre, and it is still known as "the Tor." Among the companions of the Conqueror was William de Moion, whose name also appeared as Mohun, and is sometimes discovered in the humbler modern form of Moon. We read in the "Roman du Rou" of this powerful baron:

"Le viel William de Moion
Ont avec li maint compagnon."

He was one of the greatest landowners in the West. His castle is mentioned in the Exchequer Domesday, and he is recorded to have held sixty-eight manors in Somerset, Devon,



Dorset, and Wilts. His name still survives in Tor Mohun, near Torquay, in Ottery Mohun, and some other places. He cultivated his lands, had the profit of his market and flocks, and even had vineyards in his castle gardens. The advowson of the church of St. George in the village, his fisheries at Dunster and

their great tithe barn is even now a prominent object in the landscape.

The son of William de Moion, who bore the same name, was one of the great nobles who espoused the cause of Queen Matilda, and in the "Gesta Stephani," which came from a hostile



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THE CARVED BALUSTRADE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Carhampton, the whole village of Alcombe, and the tithe of his vineyards, ploughlands, markets, and flocks he gave to St. Peter's at Bath. It is certainly interesting to know that vines were grown at Dunster in early times, and in the fourteenth century, and there is still a field on the sunny side of Grabbist Hill known as the Vineyard. The monks established a cell at Dunster, and

pen, it is recorded that he placed knights and foot soldiers in his impregnable stronghold by the seashore, whence he issued to roam over the country, "sweeping it as with a whirlwind." This ancient supporter of the misrule of Stephen, says that Mohun was guilty of cruelty, violence, fire, and pillage, and that "he changed a realm of peace and quiet, of joy and merriment,



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THE NORTH FRONT.

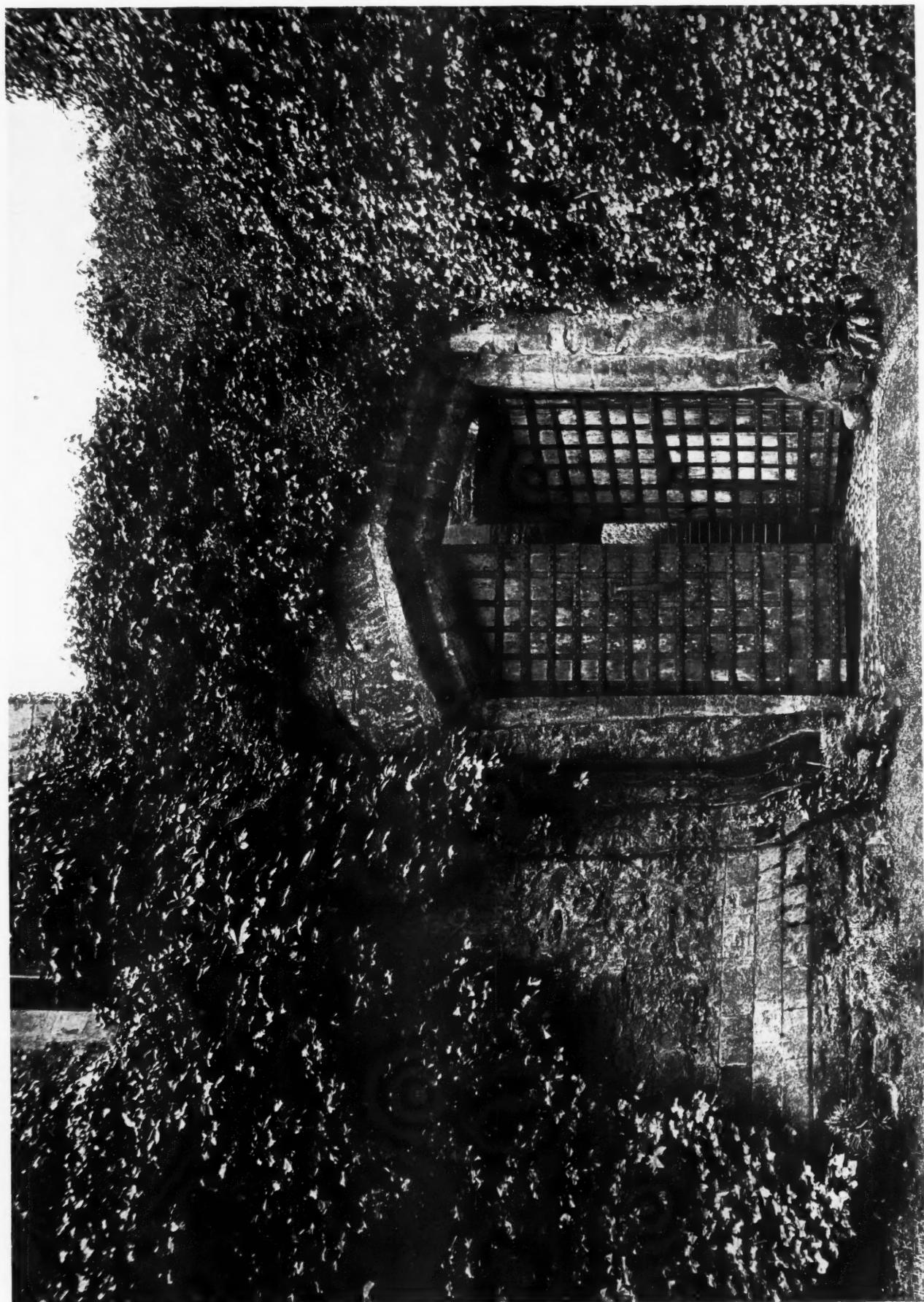
"COUNTRY LIFE."



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THE SOUTHERN TERRACE.

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"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE OLD GATE OF THE KEEP.

into a scene of strife, rebellion, weeping, and lamentation." He was styled Earl of Somerset, apparently by the favour of Matilda, and some of his descendants assumed the title. Two possessors of the same name followed, being mighty nobles in their time, and a third who probably died before his father. Then came Reginald de Moion, who obtained livery of the estate in 1204, and married a daughter of William Briwere, who eventually brought a great inheritance to his family. This Reginald died young, and, during

the minority of his son, the King appears to have held the wardship, and to have maintained archers and horsemen in the castle. Come to man's estate, the younger Reginald held the high office of Justice of the Forests South of Trent, and among many privileges which Henry III. conferred upon him was the right of hunting hares, foxes, wild cats, and other animals in all the Royal forests in Somerset. On his part, Reginald conferred many privileges upon the burgesses of Dunster, which was then both a market town and a port, and afterwards grew prosperous with its kerscymeres or "Dunsters,"

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PAINTED SPANISH LEATHER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



its yarn, and its produce. The Yarn Market is still one of the most picturesque buildings in the quaint streets of the village. The sea has since receded, and the estuary of the river Avill, a stream flowing down through Dunster Park, has silted up. Among the other dispositions that this Reginald made was for a mass to be celebrated daily to the end of time for himself, his son John, his wives, ancestors and successors, and all the faithful, in the upper chapel of St. Stephen in his castle, unless by reason of interdict or siege that

should be impossible, in which case the monks undertook that the office should be executed in the lower chapel of St. Laurence belonging to the Priory of Dunster. Reginald de Moion was certainly a great benefactor, for it was he who founded the abbey of Newenham for the white-robed Cistercians, on the borders of Devon and Somerset, and endowed it with many possessions. A monk of Newenham, who has left a moving and edifying account of his end, in 1257, avers that when the church was restored in 1333, his body was found in its sarcophagus "incorrupt, and unchanged, and exhaling a fragrant odour."



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THE UPPER GATE OF THE KEEP.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



"COUNTRY LIFE."

"THE DINING-ROOM CEILING.

The monk both saw and touched it, and during three days the astonished people came to behold.

The Castle of Dunster is of high antiquity, but the oldest existing part, so far as can be known, appears to date from this time. The great entrance gateway, the series of projecting, semi-circular towers, and the thick curtain wall which connects them, probably are the work of this Reginald de Moion. It is not easy to say, however, why the lower ward of the Norman castle required rebuilding so soon.

Reginald, being dead, was succeeded by his grandson, John, after whom in regular descent followed other Johns. One was an active warrior under Edward I., and greatly distinguished



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PORTION OF STAIRWAY.

"C.L."

himself in the wars in Flanders and Scotland, and sat in Parliament as a peer of the realm. He was one of the barons who rose against Edward II. in the matter of the favourite Gaveston. Then another John inherited the estate, and was a valiant soldier against the Scots and in the wars of Edward III., standing high in that monarch's favour, and being one of the original Knights of the Garter, in 1350. He married Joan, the daughter of Sir Bartholomew de Burghersh, a lady of great note in the fortunes of Dunster. Legend says that she obtained from her husband as much common land for the poor of the



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SCREEN IN SOUTH AISLE.

"C.L."

town as she could walk round in one day barefoot. The knight's will is rather brief, and ominously refers to creditors in London. Perhaps the fortunes of war and the too generous hands of his ancestors had shorn him of some of his prosperity; but he made dispositions, since he left no sons, to secure the estate for life to his widow.

Only once, in all its history, has Dunster passed by sale, and Sir Maxwell Lyte notes the fact that it was sold by one widow to another. The remainder was secured after her death to Lady Elizabeth Luttrell, a dame of high degree, and the price paid was 500 marks, being equivalent to £3,333 6s. 8d. The original receipt which she gave for this money is now the most interesting document preserved by Mr. Luttrell at Dunster Castle. If the amount should appear comparatively small, it must be remembered

that the Luttrells obtained no immediate advantage, for the Lady Joan did not die until nearly thirty years afterwards, namely, in 1404, when Elizabeth Luttrell had been dead nine years. After the death of her husband Lady Joan de Mohun had apparently lived much away from Dunster, and still in the undercroft of Canterbury Cathedral may be seen her monument, with the inscription "Pour Dieu priez por l'a me Johane Burwasche qe fut Dame de Mohun."

The family of Luttrell, which thus came into



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THE YARN MARKET IN THE VILLAGE STREET.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

possession of Dunster, claims descent from one Geoffrey, who was concerned in the rebellion of John during his brother's reign, and was reinstated in his Lincolnshire estates when the truculent king came to the throne. As illustrative of the continuity of land tenure in England, Sir Maxwell Lyte points out that the manor of East Quantockshead, on the seacoast, nine miles east of

a daughter of Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford and Essex, "the flower of knighthood, and the most Christian knight of the knights of the world," by his wife, the daughter of Edward I. One of the Lady Elizabeth's brothers was an original Knight of the Garter, another was Archbishop of Canterbury, a third was Lieutenant of Ireland, and a fourth was Governor of Calais.



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A PORTION OF THE SCREEN IN THE CHURCH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Dunster, is now held by Mr. G. F. Luttrell, who is a direct descendant of Ralph Pagan, who held that manor in the time of the Conqueror. The husband of the noble lady who bought Dunster was Sir Andrew Luttrell of the East Quantockshead family, and she was the daughter of that great peer, Hugh Earl of Devon, and the widow of Sir John de Vere. Her mother was

The son of Sir Andrew Luttrell was Sir Hugh, a man of great worth, honourably employed by three successive kings. He supported the House of Lancaster, was Lieutenant of Calais, and Ambassador to the Duke of Burgundy. He succeeded to Dunster on the death of Lady Joan de Mohun, but his possession was disputed by the Mohun heiresses, who held that the lady

had no right to dispose of it. A great dispute followed, ending in a long law-suit, which resulted in favour of Sir Hugh. He went to France with Henry V., and was Governor of Harfleur. Afterwards appointed Seneschal of Normandy, he lived long abroad, while his son John directed affairs at Dunster. There is a curious record of the provisions shipped from that place to Normandy for Sir Hugh. Salmon, ling, conger, and hake were salted and packed in casks, and oxen and muttons, wheat and barley formed part of the cargoes. The Laurence of Dunster sailed from Minehead to Bordeaux, apparently with Sir Hugh on board, and five live oxen and two pipes of beer were supplied for consumption on the voyage.

Although Sir Hugh Luttrell was often absent from Dunster, much work was done at the castle in his time. In 1417 masons were summoned from Bridgwater to advise about rebuilding the hall, and two years later part of the walls of the hall and castle was pulled down, and a new building was begun near by. Freestone came from Bristol and lias from Watchet, conveyed to Dunster by sea, and Sir Hugh's horses dragged it up the steep hill. This work was no doubt the gatehouse, now spanning the approach from the north-west, which some have assigned to the time of Richard II., and others, with as little warrant, to Henry VIII. It is recorded that the workmen used "crows, mottokkes, pycoses, wegges, spades, shovelles, and sleigges." Sir Hugh's accounts mention an upper and a lower castle. The former was generally known as "le Dongeon," and had a chapel, a kitchen, and at least one tower, while in the lower ward near the gatehouse stood the hall, the second chapel, Dame Hawys's tower, a tower over the entrance, with a portcullis and gate-

who fought in the battle of Pinkie, is represented, apparently allegorically, in a curious painting by Lucas de Heere, dated 1550, preserved at Dunster. He is depicted wading through the waves to the shore, while a war-ship in the offing, struck by lightning, is being abandoned by her crew, and a female figure receives him, holding in her hand a sprig of olive or bay.

We must now hasten on to the Civil Wars, when Mr. George Luttrell held his castle for the Parliament, but surrendered it on the failure of the Marquis of Hertford to establish himself in the neighbourhood. The castle was then garrisoned for the King, and Colonel Francis Wyndham was the governor. Prince Charles, afterwards Charles II., visited the place, and slept in the room bearing his name. When the tide turned in 1645, Dunster was the only place in Somerset held for the King, and Blake and Sydenham laid siege to it. Earthwork and mine were met by the stout defenders with buttress and counter-mine, and several furious attempts to carry the castle by storm failed, and Lord Hopton temporarily relieved it. It was not surrendered until after it had stood a close siege of 160 days, and its fall ended the struggle in Somerset. There are recollections of the war in the village, and the mark of a cannon shot is seen in the roof of the old Yarn Market. Our pictures must speak for the charms of the old Dunster town, which was rich in merchandise and in the privileges of its burgesses long ago. Its picturesque houses are a delight to the artist.

We shall not pursue the history of ancient Dunster further. Let us, however, note with great gratification that it has not since passed from the heirs of its old possessors. The present south front was erected about 1764 by Mr. Henry Fownes Luttrell, on the level of the upper platform.

The present owner has converted the upper storeys into one large room 46ft. long. The adaptation of the fortress to modern requirements was carried out at the beginning of the seventeenth century, to which time plaster ceilings, mantel-pieces, and various doors and windows are attributed. Mr. Francis Luttrell, in 1681, added the elaborate and most beautiful moulded plaster ceilings of the staircase and dining-room. In the richness and fine effect of the decorative fruit, bird, and other adornments, this work is not surpassed in England. The glorious pierced carving of the staircase balustrade, with its floral vases, panels, and sculptured mouldings, is certainly the work of the best craftsmen of the time.

The castle continued as fitted by Mr. Francis Luttrell up to a recent date, and great changes and improvements have been effected by the present proprietor from designs by the late Mr. Salvin. The north tower of the principal front was replaced by a larger turret



Miss M. E. Stuar

A STORMY SUNSET.

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keeper's room, the lord's room, the constable's room, store-houses, stables, etc. The park was on the south side of the Tor, partly in Dunster and partly in Carhampton, and was commonly known as the Hanger Park, or "le Hanger," doubtless from its hanging woods, which still clothe the steep. Occasional mention is also made of a New Park, and the Luttrells, like the Mohuns, had a large park at Marshwood near the sea. Sir Hugh Luttrell died in 1428, and is buried at Dunster, his monument being on the north side of the high altar in the thickness of the wall separating the chancel from the chapel. The effigy was in plate armour, carved in alabaster and gilded, but has been shamefully mutilated, as has that of Sir Hugh's wife. Let it be said here that the church is extremely beautiful and rich, with carvings that are surpassed in few places.

Sir Hugh was succeeded by Sir John, who strengthened the gatehouse by building the two buttresses on the north side; and then came Sir James, who was knighted for his prowess on the Lancastrian side at the battle of Wakefield, and was mortally wounded at the second battle of St. Albans. Upon the success of the House of York misfortune shrouded the Luttrells, whose possessions were forfeited to the Crown, and were held by the Earls of Pembroke for a time. But the tide turned with the victory of Bosworth, and the old possessors came into their own again.

It is possible that the keep had fallen into decay in the sixteenth century, and perhaps the buildings of the lower ward were not thought suitable for the residence of a gentleman of the time, for Andrew Luttrell, who succeeded in 1521, preferred to live at East Quantockshead. His son John, a soldier of note,

stair, the porch was rebuilt on a larger scale, and the edifice was raised in many parts. A lofty tower was erected on the south front, on the site of an incongruous chapel built in 1720. The hall was enlarged by throwing rooms into it, and the whole house was converted into a splendid and convenient residence. The ancient keep of the Moions having perished, the lofty Tor has now a bowling green upon its summit. The interior of the castle is very interesting throughout. The hall has a richly-embossed ceiling with pendants, and the elaborately-carved balustrade to the great staircase has been alluded to. Prince Charles's room has many old features, and a mantel dated 1620. The house is also rich in old portraits, some of them by eminent masters. The *corámi* of painted leather, probably Venetian, but perhaps Spanish, representing the history of Antony and Cleopatra, are extremely rare and interesting.

About the castle are spread radiant gardens and glorious woodlands. The visitor who passes beneath the gatehouse, with its iron-studded door and flanking towers, is led to the terrace on the south, where a lemon tree bears fruit upon the wall, and there is a mighty yew hedge, high, dense, and thick, through which enchanting prospects of the woods and the bridge crossing the stream are disclosed. Then it is a delight to ascend to the bowling green on the summit of the wooded Tor to look out over the lovely country towards Minehead, or over Blue Anchor and the rocky islets of the Holmes to the Welsh mountains beyond, or to turn to the glen and the oak copse of the park, to the pleasant prospects of the valley of the Avill, and to the more distant majesty of the brown side of the huge bulk of

Dunkery. There are enchanting walks through shady paths in the woods, with a glimpse sometimes of the stream, and the sound of a water-mill, and then, on the lawn, a bugle horn will awake a triple echo, as if to summon the dead Moions and the old Luttrells from their sleep.

LAYING . . . COMPETITIONS.

WHILST farmers, and those resident in the country generally, are realising the value of the domestic hen, and are paying more attention to the production of table poultry and eggs, anything which tends to increase the popularity and value of this important branch of our national food supply should be given all possible encouragement by those whose efforts are directed towards the improvement of the utility characteristics of pure-bred fowls.

The laying competitions of the Utility Poultry Club, initiated in 1897, and continued yearly since, are held for the purpose of testing and improving the prolificacy of pure-bred fowls. The club recognises the fact that it is possible, by means of careful selection and breeding, to build



RECORDING.

intervals by the manager and his assistant, who release those birds which have laid, and record the distinguishing number of each hen, and the weight of the egg, on a form provided for the purpose. By this means the total number of eggs laid by each pullet is known, and the information so obtained proves of great service to the owner of the birds. The birds are given three meals per day, the first, early in the morning, being a warm soft mash consisting of boiled vegetables and meal, with freshly-chopped butcher's meat added several times a week. The meat takes the place of insects and worms, which are generally unobtainable in the winter, and provides the albumen so necessary for the production of eggs. The midday meal is a very small one, consisting of a little grain buried in the litter of the scratching-shed; it keeps the birds healthily occupied during the afternoon. The last meal is a plentiful one of whole sound wheat, barley, or oats, the different varieties of grain being used alternately.

The value of systematic breeding for egg production has been shown in the results of the recently-held competitions; as, for example, last year, when a well-known laying strain of White Wyandottes headed the list, and broke previous records by laying 276 eggs in sixteen weeks, the prize for the highest individual score being won by a pullet in the same pen, with seventy-eight eggs, or an average of nearly five eggs per week for the whole period

—this in the depth of winter. The efforts of modern poultry-keepers should be directed towards securing a plentiful supply of winter eggs; as to the possibility of this there is no



VIEW OF THE PENS AT ASHOVER.

up strains of layers superior in egg-producing powers. The annual competition this year is being held at the Butts Poultry Farm, Ashover (under the management of Mr. P. Rawson Birks), and will extend over a period of sixteen weeks, dating from October 12th. Ashover itself is a delightful spot, and a well-known Derbyshire health and pleasure resort. The land on which the pens are situated lies in a valley; the soil is of a light, loamy nature, and the general aspect is South West. Fifty-one pens of birds were entered for the competition, but accommodation only being provided for thirty, these were selected by ballot. Each pen consists of four pullets of one breed, hatched not earlier than January of the present year, and representatives of the following breeds are taking part in the contest: Gold, Silver, White, and Partridge Wyandottes, Buff and Black Orpingtons, Buff Rocks, Black Minorcas, White Leghorns, Anconas, Lincolnshire Buffs, and Faverolles. Buff Orpingtons and White Wyandottes proved the most popular varieties, and represented nearly 55 per cent. of the total number of entries.

Every bird is numbered with a copper ring on one leg, and recording nests are used. These nests, which have doors, close by a simple contrivance directly the hen is on the nest. The houses are visited at frequent



PEN OF WHITE WYANDOTTES.

longer a shadow of doubt. Improved methods of breeding, improved housing, and scientific feeding will ensure a supply in the coldest and most inclement weather—and all this without adding appreciably to the cost of maintenance.

IN PRAISE OF SUNDIALS.

AS an addition to the "Garden Lover's Series," Mr. Alfred H. Hyatt has compiled "A Book of Sundial Mottoes" (Wellby) which will be found to yield some interesting reading. In a brief introduction he says, "sombre or genial, the sundial motto, devised according to the appropriate art, has the beauty of brevity and fulness. No wonder if to the precision of Latin grammar has been generally assigned the safeguarding of the message of three or four words, long, slow, and complete with their burden of meaning." The characteristic feature of the book is a collection of sixty "mottoes for dials, with their meaning in English," taken from a curious and rare old work entitled "Mechanick Dialling: or the New Art of Shadows." The translations are as interesting as the original mottoes, since the translators have allowed free scope to their fancy. The meaning of "ARS. LONGA. VITA. BREVIS" is given as "I. DIE. TO-DAY. AND. LIVE. TO-MORROW," while "AUT. CÆSAR. AUT. NIHIL" is translated as "I. SHINE. OR. SHROUD." "EX. HOC. MOMENTO. PENDET. ÆTERNITAS." is boiled down to "NOW. OR. NEVER." "FUGIO. FUGE" is "BE. GONE. ABOUT.

"YOUR. BUSINESS. I. STAY. FOR. NO. MAN." "DISCE. BENE. VIVERE. & . MORI" is beautifully rendered as "SHINE. AND. SET." "QUALIS. VITA. . FINIS. ITA." is Englished into "PRAISE. A. FAIR. DAY. AT. NIGHT."

In the remainder of his collection, Mr. Hyatt has very successfully avoided those that become trite, though most of the old favourites are included, such as,

"HOURS. FLY,
FLOWERS. DIE,
NEW. DAYS,
NEW. WAYS,
PASS. BY;
LOVE. STAYS."

In conclusion, he gives a few extracts from authors who have praised the sundial beautifully (and who has done so better than Charles Lamb?): "What a dead thing is a clock, with its ponderous embowlements of lead and brass, its pert or solemn dullness of communication, compared with the simple altar-like structure and silent heart-language of the old dial! It stood as the garden god of Christian gardens," though we like the old writer, Robert Hegge: "A Dial is the Visible Map of Time, till Whose Invention 'twas folly in the Sun to play with a Shallow. It is the Anatomie of the Day and a Scale of Miles for the Jornie of the Sun. It is the Silent Voice of Time, and without it the Day were dumbe . . . It is ye Book of ye Sun on which he writes the Storie of the Day. Lastly, Heaven itself is but a general Dial, and a Dial it, in a lesser volume." Shakespeare, who has something to say about every subject connected with country life, has a beautiful and familiar passage:

"Methinks it were a happy life . . .
To carve out dials quaintly point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run;—
How many make the hour full complete;
How many hours bring about the day;
How many days will finish up the year;
How many years a mortal man may live.
When this is known, then to divide the
times; . . .
So minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and
years,
Pass'd over to the end they were created."

And among moderns we do not know that any one has written more beautifully than Richard Jefferies: "The hours when the mind is absorbed by beauty are the only hours when we really live, so that the longer we can stay among these things so much more is snatched from inevitable Time. Let the shadow advance upon the dial—I can watch it with equanimity while it is there to be watched. It is only when the shadow is not there, when the clouds of winter cover it, that the dial is terrible. The invisible shadow goes on and steals from us. . . . These are the only hours that are not wasted—these hours that absorb the soul and fill it with beauty."

AN ESSEX ESTUARY.

MOST physical features attain their maximum development in some particular region, of which they are accordingly regarded as characteristic. Yonder the mountains with their rocky chasms, there the primordial forests of luxuriant growth, and where the North Sea of fickle mood frets along our shingled shores and fills the broad sea marshes with plaintive music, broad rivers bring upon their sluggish tide the waste of the fair lands through which they have travelled, and spread over a thousand acres that which when seen ablaze with reflected sunlight might be a strand of burnished gold, or in the grey of dawn some phantom shore emerging from the tranquil waters. But associated ideas often blind us to natural beauty, and so we think only with loathing of the mud, whether it be in the city street or piled mountainously about the river mouth, there to make good the ravages of the sea. We perhaps forget that it was thus that continents were built up, and that the mud of the primeval earth is the building stone and marble of to-day; and as a great teacher has shown the "Ethics of the Dust," so, too, the ethics of the mud are only less real as food for thought than its beauty



J. Mummery.

LOW TIDE IN AN ESSEX RIVER.

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is pleasant to the eye. In the north-west corner of Essex rises the river Blackwater, not far from Audley End, a great house which Evelyn describes as "one of the stateliest palaces in the kingdom," and which takes its name from that of the chief agent in the spoliation of the English monasteries in the reign of the bluff King Henry; and hard by at Ridgewell the river Colne has its birth. Thence through rich pastoral country, held ever and again by such sweet hindrances as clothe their fertile banks, these twin streams wend their way towards the ocean, long before reaching which their riparian character gives place to that which tells of the vicinity of the sea, holding at last in the caress of their broad estuaries, sparkling emerald-like, the green island of Mersea. Here from the summit of the church-crowned hill of West Mersea, rising steeply from a verdant shore, the eye may range over the limitless marshland, called locally "Salttings."

No ordinary marshland is this. A vast expanse stretching away to the uninterrupted horizon, reticulated throughout by innumerable water-courses or "fleets," which, urging their way where the soft earth has offered least resistance, have assumed

those huge hills of glittering ooze, yet almost before you have marked it beginning to rise the great banks have disappeared, and next a thousand gleaming rivulets have threaded their way amongst the green Salttings, and, rising yet higher, the water overflows each small channel and merges all in one vast plain of shining water on which the herbage floats like the tangled shoal weed of the tropics. Then it is we discern clearly the mighty rampart of sea-wall, the legacy of early Dutch immigrants, which for mile after mile separates the cultivated meadows from that strange border-land 'tween earth and sea, where, tide by tide, land and water seem to wrestle for supremacy.

Fair to look upon are these Essex "Salttings," with their rich green pranked with golden ragwort or purple aster, or at another season shot with pale mauve of the sea-lavender, or sprinkled over with the still paler blossoms of the thrift, but dangerous to cross without guidance. Again and again will our path be checked by the labyrinthine wanderings of the "fleets" and "rills"; repeatedly shall we have to retrace our steps and, foiled at last, make a *détour* of perhaps half a mile to reach a



A. Horsley Hinton.

THE OYSTER GROUNDS, WEST MERSEA.

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strange serpentine contortions. Then, when at ebb-tide, the water stealthily slips away, deeper and deeper grow the dykes, broader and fuller grow the shadows, and the reflections of these shadows, trembling and dimpling, break into quaint ribands and zigzags, until the last of the tide has trickled away and only this wonderful deposit of impalpable, quivering ooze remains.

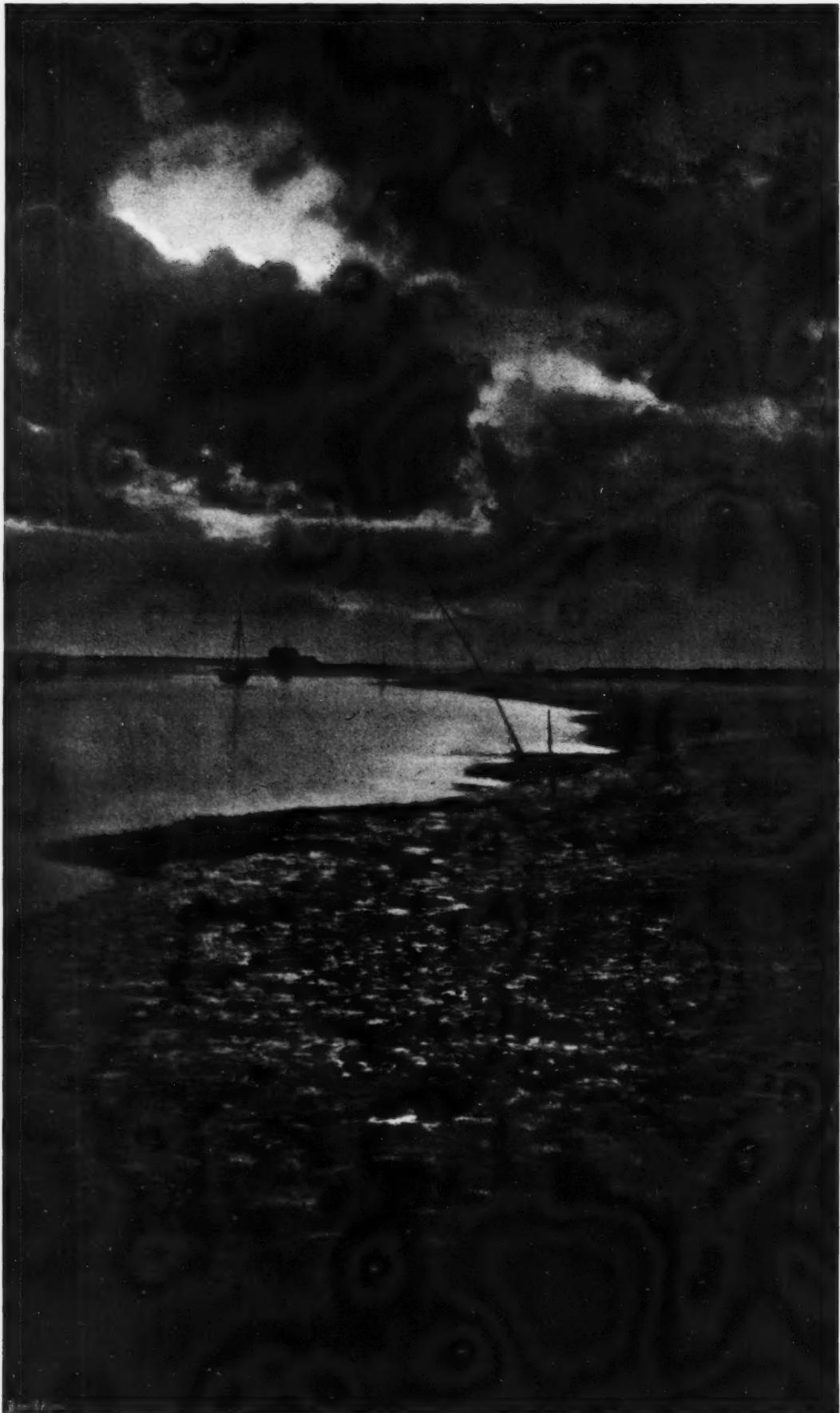
Was ever such colour? Not just plain brown earth, but red and purple, amber and ashen grey, with here and there a dash of green, so vivid that by it a chrysoprase might pale. The tiny pools of water imprisoned in rich brown hollows are opal and dark blue, and, if the sun is low, flash like molten silver. Presently the still receding water will have fallen far below the Salttings with their dykes, and will have left of the navigable river only the tiniest rivulet lost to view between vast hill ranges of mud, so softly yielding to each bend of the current that their every line is a perfect and harmonious curve. And if one stays to watch the returning tide it will seem as though nothing can save the whole land from inundation. It appeared at first as though the water could never rise sufficiently to again cover

spot but six yards distant, and then only to find further progress barred by a hidden fissure half filled with that on which, more treacherous than any quicksand, no man dare set foot.

One there was, a stranger to these parts, of whom it is told how, returning at night from the inn to his boat, which lay at anchor off the shore, he sought a short cut across the Salttings, but disappeared into the darkness and was seen no more. Out of the black night there had come one despairing cry, but long before the help which was close at hand could arrive, the unctuous slime had closed over his head, giving no trace of his living sepulture!

Everywhere around in this great Mudland there is abundant evidence that Mersea and its surroundings were better appreciated by earlier invaders than by the modern Britisher. Came hardy Norsemen in from the sea, raiding and resting awhile from their wild excursions, and Roman nobles dwelt here. Came, later, Danish and Dutch, but now, with the stream of ocean-borne commerce going north and south on the one hand, and the busy rush of railway traffic far off on the other, Mersea has been left

between these two tideways of civilisation, as we may sometimes see a floating leaf laying becalmed just out of the eddying swirl of a turbulent water-course. All day long the plaintive cries of sea-birds mingle with the rustle of the leaves in the wind-bent boughs, and in a passing lull of the ceaseless soothng of the breeze in the grass, there comes the far sound of the full-toned sea, whither the brown sails go by, and whence comes the harsh clang of the bell-buoy which marks the entrance to this all-but-forgotten haven.



A. Horsley Hinton.

AN EXPANSE OF MUD.

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In the clear air of the morning we may watch the shimmer on the vast plains and banks, hardly less liquid than the water which has just left them, and which, in its deeper channels and outside the mud belt, is planted with tall reed-like wands of willow wood, which mark the whereabouts of the oyster-beds, for here the classic mollusc is pampered and fattened in the undisturbed creeks. Remote from the rest of the world, and only accessible by one road (and that road submerged at high tide), life at Mersea is primitive enough, and, secure from intrusion, one may here, from day to day, in the piling up and fashioning of these millions of tons of mud, witness the continuation of those cosmic forces which, in the earth's earlier history, made the chalk hills from an ocean's ooze, and built up the sedimentary rocks with their embedded records of organic life. Not by mighty upheaval of the earth's crust, nor by vast cataclysm, but by the unwearied waters.

And over the whole, in all seasons, blows ever the North Sea air, compact of every vitalising property, and some day this jewel island, a bright gem in the great Mudland, will have its peace disturbed and breakwaters and dredgers will prepare the way for steam ferry and floating dock. Then Mersea as we may see it to-day will be but a sweet memory ; the Kursaal will be built on the existing remains of a Roman theatre, and eligible residences will efface the foundations of the villas where dwelt awhile the captains of Caesar's legions.

A. HORSLEY HINTON.

FROM the FARMS.

A NORTHUMBRIAN SHEPHERD.

THE following little etching of a Northumbrian shepherd is extracted from an article by Mr. T. J. Young in the current number of the *Agricola Club Journal*, and is taken from life by one who has both an eye to see and a pen to express what he sees : "We might do worse than endeavour to illustrate the Northumberland workman by taking a specific type as an example. We will choose one from amongst those bred on the extensive grazings and fells which flank the more fertile land of the dales or river valleys. The shepherd here is 'bad to beat'



A. Horstey Hinton.

AT THE EBB.

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when compared with others in the same profession. We will usually find him in stature 'lang but leet,' like the immortal James Pigg, of fox-hunting fame. His face is seldom found to have made acquaintance with a razor, but grows, in a normal case, a voluminous beard as some protection against the storms which he has sometimes to face, when the snow begins to drift, and his ewes must be got into safety. If

in point of fact, it is more remarkable for the exquisite manner in which it is got up than for its solid contents. Mr. W. M. Tod, the author, is too much given to the pursuit of theory. In a practical treatise his first chapter, entitled "The Best Pursuit of All," would have been dispensed with. These abstract laudations of husbandry now sound a little pre-historic, and in our time one wants to get at the very heart of a subject

belonging to the old school, he affects the plaid, but the more modern mackintosh may sometimes be allowed, though it is very doubtful whether it has any advantages over the former, properly put on. He is usually thoughtful, as might be expected from his surroundings; he has generally a considerable belief in the value of reading and general education; and he may frequently be heard to say, with paternal pride, that so and so of his numerous family is 'a grand scholar.' We may find him, in a few cases, taking an active part in religious matters or politics, and, it may be, on the 'plan' for local preaching, in which case he 'holds forth' with great vigour. He is never tired of discussing matters of policy and detail respecting the one great aim of his existence—the proper management of sheep—and we perhaps see him at his best at an agricultural show or sale amongst the Cheviots or black-faces, laying down the law about the merits of a particular 'tup' to a knot of his brother shepherds, all of whom, however, would as soon think of altering their own opinion as he would think of giving away one whit of his. His constant companion, the collie, is, like himself, sagacious but determined; and, as his master and friends are giving their views on matters of ovine worth, he is making use of his opportunity to settle his canine differences."

A BEAUTIFUL FARM Book.

As a rule books on farming have not lavished upon them the resources of a printer's skill and ingenuity, but "Farming," in the "Haddon Hall Library" (Dent), is an exception. We see that it has been acknowledged by one of our contemporaries as an art book, and,

at once, without "preliminary cackle," as Mr. Jorrocks called it. And even in this essay there are traces of a lack of familiarity with the actual conditions that exist, as, for example, when discussing the game question, Mr. Tod says: "Would that landlords more often considered their tenants in these matters, for they could many a time turn a young poacher into a true and keen sportsman!" To talk of a young farmer as a poacher is simply nonsense; the farmer does not belong to the class from which poachers come. It is the idler class of labourer, the village ne'er-do-well, the public-house loafer and idler, who finds his vocation "in the merry moonlight." The note of the whole book is a want of acquaintance with the actual state of things in a rural district. Mr. Tod is something in the Cambridge University Agricultural Department, and his work savours more of the lecture-room than of the green fields. His chapters on fertility, the improvement of soils, manuring, corn crops, and so on, are precisely what we get periodically in pamphlets from each of the agricultural colleges, and we have no hesitation in saying that they are not what a young farmer wants when beginning business. In these days, the young man who takes a holding has in the majority of cases received special education, and is quite able to write these chapters for himself. What he needs is something different entirely. For one thing, school and college have probably taught him to undervalue the lore of the working people around him, yet this is often of greater practical assistance than all the book knowledge in the world. The old labourer not only speaks from his own experience, but from the experience of many generations which has been handed down; and should it happen that he belongs to a family which has been long attached to the same plot of ground, he will understand its peculiarities, its needs, and its capacity much better than anyone else, if the farmer only has patience and tact enough to let him develop his knowledge in his own way. Miss Kemp Welch has succeeded admirably in making illustrations for this book. No pictures of hers that have been exhibited in the galleries have pleased us nearly so well, and we have had the pleasure of following her work since the days when she was the star of Professor Herkomer's pupils, but—and we are afraid this is rather a serious "but" for the author and publishers of the book—these prints are of no real service; they pretend to be nothing but ornamental. Now a farmer turning to a book for information as to his craft is not likely to be content even with such exquisite pictures as those called "The Morning of Life," or "House Fed." What he will look for probably is a picture of a first-rate horse—a Shire, a Suffolk, a Clydesdale, or a Hackney. He wants, as far as possible, to know what points to look for when he goes to buy a horse, or to set a value on one he has reared. He is told casually in the text about buying for either beef-producing or milk-producing, but very little guidance is offered as to how he will recognise what he is in search of. If he had placed before him a good "blocky" Aberdeen-Angus and a wedge-shaped, bony, milking Jersey, so as to bring out the essential difference between a beef cow and a dairy cow, something would be added to his education. As far as illustrations go in this book the practical is most carefully avoided. There is not a chapter on farm buildings, and, of course, no drawing or picture, and in all the talk about manuring there is little or no guide to what is the most important part of this subject, the treatment of stable manure and the management of cattle sheds. Similarly in regard to all that appertains to the feeding of the

creatures Mr. Tod is behind the times altogether. The idea of apportioning fixed rations has long been an exploded one. And, again, the economic question, the study of what is and is not profitable, has not been gone into with the thoroughness that a practical man requires. We are afraid, therefore, that the book must be dismissed merely as a piece of beautiful printing, accompanied by nice illustrations, but utterly unsuited to the wants of those who go to a book for help and instruction in the ceaseless and arduous toil of husbandry.

AGRICULTURAL RETURNS.

There are many points of interest in the agricultural returns for 1903, acreage and livestock. In regard to livestock we now know that the returns of 1903 are much better than were those of 1902, an increase being shown in the total number of horses, cattle, and pigs. An increase of nearly 3 per cent. in the number of horses in one year points to an increase in the business of breeding them. It is probably, in fact, due to the greater popularity of breeding Shire horses as part of farmwork, as it is more and more recognised that these can be made the means of earning a considerable and certain income from the land. Cattle have increased by 149,000, and the increase is spread over all the English counties with the exception of Derbyshire. Scotland shows a gain of 25,000 head, but in Wales there has been a decline. Cows and heifers have been increased by 32,000. The number of sheep, however, shows a decline to the extent of 120,000 ewes and 64,000 other sheep. In a great majority of the English counties we are sorry to see that the ewe flock has decreased, and in a few counties there was a considerable decrease in the other classes of sheep. Pigs appear to have multiplied, as there were in 1903 17 per cent., or 387,000, more than there were the year before.

ON THE GREEN.

EXCEEDING bitter is the cry of the "Golf Widow." She has been crying aloud in the *Weekly Scotsman*, even in this season that Mr. Chamberlain has made so interesting for us. We cannot refuse to allow him this credit, at least, no matter to which side of politics we belong. To deny it would be as unsportsmanlike as to wish there were no bunkers. With regard to his policy, the golfer will know better what line to play on as soon as he has some definite statement as to its effect on the price of imported American golf balls. To return to the crying widow, there are several facts to be considered in estimating the case. For one woman that cries in print because of her husband's absence on the links, there may quite likely be a dozen that would be ready to sing a song of thanksgiving if only golf, or some other agency, would remove their husbands from them for so many hours in the day—only that they do not care to publish that song. It might be misunderstood, especially by the husbands. And, on the other hand, are there not such people as golf widowers, or golf widow men, if, as we are told by the purists, there is no such word as widower, speaking properly, as a golfer should? Are there not a number of poor men whose wives desert them for golf many hours in the day? Of course there are. But do they cry aloud in the *Weekly Scotsman*? They suffer and are strong, and their noble reticence proves the dignity of their sex. No golf widow, at all events, ought to deem herself a proper object of compassion at this time of year, for if her husband is out all the hours of daylight at his golf, she may still have as much as most wives appear to want of their husbands' society; for none yet has complained of her husband's golfing by moonlight. The reply to the cry is obvious—these



M. Dixon.

THE HON. LOIS VARDE-BULLER GOING TO THE ELEVENTH HOLE.

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ladies should play golf too; or, if they do not care for that, should try to qualify themselves to be tolerably efficient caddies. They have proved themselves able to keep silence on the stroke.

Mr. C. K. Hutchison is playing up. Apart from Mr. Maxwell, he is about the strongest of the rising generation in amateur golf at the present moment, as would appear. By the way, at what degree of altitude does the generation cease to "rise"? Neither Mr. Maxwell nor Mr. Hutchison is extremely young, both approaching what we may perhaps call Cabinet Minister age; yet we look upon both as hardly fledged as golfers. Mr. Hutchison got the award in his favour of the tie, under protest, between him and Mr. Fry over the St. George's Vase, but otherwise he has not had much luck. He played very well at St. Andrews, round about the autumn medal time, but on the medal day he was only equal third, and well out of it. The other day, at the Honourable Company's meeting at Muirfield, he made a very good round of 77, which equals his previous medal record there, and therefore might fairly be expected to win. He was a stroke better than Mr. Maxwell, yet he did not win. Mr. Laidlay, with that marvellous faculty that he has developed in his later years of playing an extraordinarily good single round, while at the same time he does not seem to be able to keep the game going, or an affair like a tournament, at anything like the temperature of his best lays, broke all previous records of the Honourable Company's medal meetings with a 76, and so won. It was rather hard on Mr. Hutchison, to whom medals in such good company are not such common affairs as they are to Mr. Laidlay. They seem to play for an extraordinary number of medals in the Lothians, in spite of what the Scot says of the Sassenach as a pot-hunter. It is the handicap pot-hunting that the Scot seems to take exception to. He does not seem to mind if the prize is for scratch play. Anyhow, Mr. Laidlay is showing flashes of dazzling brilliance, to speak in the language of the diamond merchant, and Mr. Hutchison is certainly one of the best of those who have not yet quite "arrived."

Golfers, and some others, will be glad to know what has been the matter with the weather, so that we all have begun to grow web-footed. I know it is correct, because I had it from a boy at school, who heard it from "another fellow," who was told by "a man from Greenwich." It is that the sun has got a hole in it (which, presumably, lets the rain through), so that it is going to rain for ten or eleven years without stopping, except for a few fine days here and there. This "hole in the sun," perhaps in the nature of a bunker, is possibly what Sir Norman Lockyer, an ardent golfer, calls a "spot"; but although it is a golfer that ascribes the record rain in our islands to this blemish in the solar complexion, the simple-minded man will receive the explanation with some hesitation, in consideration of the fact that "uninterrupted sunshine" for many weeks is reported from Canada, and that about a month ago some parts of Italy were absolutely parched for lack of a drop of rain. It must be a very small solar derangement that can have results so partial. So, at least, it appears to the unscientific judgment, or lack of judgment, if that be the better name for it.

The Devonshire ladies, as it was quite right they should, won the first county championship under the new conditions of tri-secting England into West, East, and Midlands. This was right both because Miss Yarde-Buller, as the Devonshire captain, had the biggest share in arranging the sectional conditions, which have answered so well; and also because, after all, the West Country is the West Country, and there is no other quite like it—though this may be an opinion that East and Midlands will not endorse with any real fervour. The play was close enough, Kent tieing with Devon on the first trial, but being pretty decisively beaten on the playing off. It is a point to the credit of Westward Ho!

HORACE HUTCHINSON.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

OF *Punch* literature we seem to be threatened with an avalanche. Not long ago Mr. A'Beckett wrote his biography, and now comes the present editor, Sir Francis Burnand, with his *Records and Reminiscences* (Methuen). We may say at once that they form a book full of lively reading, though this applies to the second volume more than to the first. In "a sort of apology," used as a preface, Sir Francis Burnand says: "Heaven forbid that I should be so lost to all sense of humour as to take advantage of an amiably disposed public, and insist upon telling them the story of my life." What he means the reader may guess, but we cannot, since it takes him over 300 pages of solid print to narrate the events of the first twenty-one years of his life—events, we say, although they are occurrences so slight and trivial that not one remains in the memory after a careful and diligent perusal of the first volume. These notes are adorned with many curious and beautiful pictures of the author. "My Portrait, painted and presented to me by Professor Von Herkomer, R.A.," is the frontispiece to the first volume. A playful sally of Mr. Reed's, called "The Punchiboss, or Ephsee Bee," is the frontispiece to the second volume, and in addition to these we have Sir Francis Burnand as "Popple, in a farce of his own, written for the A. D. C., Cambridge"; as



M. Dixon. MISS COMPTON LUMDIE AT THE FIRST TEE.

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"The Chicken, in the farce of 'B. B.'"; as "Mephistopheles, in his burlesque of 'Faust'"; and as the "Brigand Rumpitifooze, at the A. D. C." In the second volume we have him in caricature conversing with Bismarck. Thus the purchaser of this book ought before he has finished to be very familiar with the physiognomy of the author.

We have more than hinted at something like dulness in the first volume. It is said that the most melancholy of men outside the arena is the clown, and we confess that the first book of this autobiography impressed us with the idea that *Punch* must act as an exhaust pump upon the humour of its contributors and editor. The only event of any consequence is his conversion to Rome, and that, as was becoming in the editor of a comic paper, ended with something like farce. Cardinal Manning, who was the instrument of the conversion or perversion, wished that Burnand should join the priesthood, and here is the ending of an affecting scene between them:

"My dear boy," he said, sniffing briskly, as if now he were going to clinch matters *hic et nunc*. "Consider that the question of vocation is one for the individual soul. It is to be regarded only in the light of what is best for the soul." Here Dr. Manning paused, sniffed, and nursed his right knee, clasping it with both hands. Then, rocking himself, in measured rhythm as it were, slowly forwards and backwards, he continued, in his playfully sarcastic manner: "Why, you might as well say—that to be a—a—cobbler—is a vocation."

"Whereupon, nervously inspired, I blurted out: 'Well—er—a—a cobbler has a great deal to do with the sole.'

"The situation was too much for even Dr. Manning's gravity. In vain he tried with his hand to hide his smile; the smile would spread, and did. But he shook his head as he rose from his chair, and so gave me to understand that our interview was at an end."

The second volume contains much more entertaining matter. In it we meet with a great many social and a few literary celebrities. Among the latter is Thackeray, who is demonstrated to have fulfilled the conditions of respectability as laid down by a well-known Scot: "He is respectable; he keeps a gig."

"On another occasion I remember Thackeray driving down to Richmond or Dulwich in his carriage. After dinner—he stayed late—he asked Percival Leigh ('the old Professor') if he should give him a lift home; and the Professor accepted. Mark Lemon informed me afterwards that Thackeray had been immensely amused by the Professor, on alighting, taking out his purse and asking Thackeray how much he was indebted to him, as he insisted on paying his share of the trap! He had no idea, it seems, that Thackeray had made so much money as enabled him to keep his own carriage. Thackeray replied that 'he would let him know when the bill came in,' and so the Professor, under the impression that Thackeray hired his carriage for occasional outings, consented to defer his contribution until the livery-stable keeper should send in his account."

Another considerable man that we come across is Robert Browning. Here is Sir Francis Burnand's description of the poet:

"Among such *convives* as those above mentioned, the poet Browning was comparatively silent, while George Sala and Edmund Yates were the amusing conversationalists. Browning was about the last man whom anyone, meeting him for the first time, would have taken for a poet. It is expected, generally, of a poet that he should be of somewhat eccentric appearance. He should be above the prevailing fashion in dress, and wear a costume entirely of his own creation and the tailor's make. Now there was nothing about Browning of the Tennysonian ruggedness. He was in every way 'neat but not gaudy'; faultlessly dressed, and if there is one epithet above another that could be chosen to exactly describe him, it would be the adjective 'smug.'"

Of the good stories in the book there is scarcely any end, some of them, such as that of Polly Wood, being just, as it were, touched with the shadowy fancies of a still lower Bohemia.

Perhaps the best story in the book is one told about Stanley, the explorer. Linley Sambourne had very much wished to meet Stanley, and one evening, at the Burnards', he had made up his mind that Stanley was to be one of the guests. Not to disappoint him, Burnand introduced Alfred Watson as the explorer, and, as might have been expected, Alfred, in his attempt to live up to the character, had a very lively time, as among the visitors was Mr. Gilbert, who was extremely keen on the pronunciation of certain African names, as witness the following passage :

"I asked," resumed Gilbert, with the utmost deference, "from what African port you had started?"

"Ah! I beg your pardon," replied Alfred Watson. "Yes—quite so." Then cleverly getting round the question, he said, "I landed at"—here occurred a slight pause, everyone at table silent, anxiously listening for the forthcoming narrative. Then Alfred burst on us with "M'bobo," adding immediately, in a tone that indicated a slight contempt for his questioner's ignorance, "Most people know that."

"Gilbert bowed. 'Interesting spot, I believe?' I put interrogatively.

"The pseudo-Stanley was not to be caught so easily. He foresaw that had he replied in the affirmative Gilbert would have pressed him for all the details that made 'M'bobo' interesting. So Alfred Watson answered briefly—

"No, not at all; very ordinary."

The only objection that we have to this story is that it is too long to quote, and we must leave the *dénouement* to the reader to find out.

The atmosphere of the book is peculiar to itself. It is not exactly that of the high literary circles, and few names that are considerable in literature are mentioned in it. The *Punch* circle, in fact, is *sui generis*, as we might expect, flippant, laughing, fashionable, clever, and not serious. The history of the Two Pins Club "places" it, so to speak. The name of the club was suggested by Sir Francis himself, and its origin arose from the fact that he, Sir Charles Russell, Frank Lockwood, Sir Edward Lawson, John Tenniel, Linley Sambourne, Willie Mathews, and Harry Furniss used to go riding on holidays.

"Now," says Sir Francis, "the only two distinguished equestrians associated not only with hard riding, but distinctly with hard road-riding, were honest Johnnie Gilpin and dishonest Dick Turpin. Ergo. Let us call ourselves 'The Two Pins Club.' And this was carried by acclamation."

The club was entertained successively by Lord Rosebery, Sir Edward Lawson, and others, and its fame spread so much

that it lost its original character altogether, and took to dining instead of riding. As Sir Francis says: "It was a painful reflection that in an equestrian club so many members so well mounted had all fallen off," and the members grew, in a sense, too big for their boots. Russell became Lord Chief Justice of England, Frank Lockwood was transformed into

Sir Frank, Q.C., M.P., and so on. So the club voluntarily underwent euthanasia, and passed into the land of the things that have been.

So, like all institutions, the *Punch* circle itself wears to an end, and Sir Francis could scarcely have completed this book without reflecting that so many of the dear familiar faces have gone for ever. Probably for the purpose of reminding others who they were, he prints his autographic album as an appendix to the second volume.

THE . . .
SOCIETY OF
PORTRAIT.
PAINTERS .

If this year there are no masterpieces at the New Gallery, there are at least several canvases by masters.

The work, roughly speaking, may be divided into three classes. There are paintings by some of the most gifted of living artists; there are others by the first-class craftsmen, who are not great artists, but who know their business; and, unfortunately, there are far too many works of the hard, dry order, where the portrait is nothing more than the pretty vulgar or the vulgar pretty, or, if a man has been the sitter, a commonplace rendering of surface trivialities. To be sure, it requires less emotional and intellectual effort to paint a likeness of a lady's dress, a man's necktie or coat-button, than to seize the "true inwardness" of a sitter as Professor Lenbach has done in his portrait of Gladstone. But when we have ceased complaining of the *article de commerce*, sprinkled, as it were, throughout the exhibition, we find a great deal to interest and not a little to admire.

To begin with, there is the exquisite unfinished "Rouge et Noir, L'Eventail" by Whistler, which, as usual, makes everything, excepting perhaps Professor Max Lieberman's portrait of himself, look vulgar beside it. The impudence in the pose of the small round head, thrown slightly back! in the tense, stiffened action

of the arms, and in the sinewy lines of the black boa following the curves of the body! The whole suggestion of the figure is full of energy and character. There is some boldness in the colour scheme too; in the vermillion dress against the dull purple of the background—a pleasing combination which we do not recall having seen before in a single-figure subject. Contrast the refinement of treatment of this Spanish lady with the "Gallito et sa Famille" by M. Zuloaga, in the adjoining room. We



H. Burkinshaw.

MOONLIGHT ON THE WATER.

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do not wish to disparage the brilliant performances of this artist, but we would wish to draw attention to the absence of any of those more delicate sensibilities which stamp all Whistler's works, from the portraits to the slightest indication with the needle on copper.

We had occasion to mention M. Zuloaga's Spanish subjects in our notice of the salon of last spring. The family group, now being shown at the New Gallery, is scarcely as successful as either of those pictures which brought the artist's name into such prominence in Paris. It is, however, a characteristic example of his methods and his likings, even to the emptiness of the background—a peculiarity which was strongly criticised by the French painters. M. Zuloaga is not one of those artists who seek "quality" in their painting. We venture to suggest that these pictures would be more effective on the exhibition walls than in private rooms, as companions to live with. We are glad to see close by this rather flashy production, M. Albert Besnard's excellent portrait of his wife. The canvas drew many admirers when it was hung in the Champ de Mars last spring. Here, in London, it has lost none of its qualities, in fact, it is rather improved by the quieter light and by being hung more on the level with the eye; now one can better appreciate the beautiful modelling and painting of the head and hands, that wonderful background of the room in silvery light, and the simple, expressive treatment of the black silk dress.

Mr. Orchardson's portraiture is a different matter. Of the four large canvases shown we prefer the "Henry Balfour Ferguson, Esq." Is it because in this one we find less to distract from the sitter to the background, or is it because the head is more living? The fault we would find with most of Mr. Orchardson's portraits is that the figures have no life, they give no sense of having blood in their veins, they are, in fact, still-life. In still-life Mr. Orchardson is at his best. In these canvases it is the vase of flowers on the table, the intricacies of pattern, and the delicate colouring of the carpets that interest us, rather than the elaborately-painted Provost of Aberdeen in crimson and fur-lined gown, or the portrait of the lady in the armchair. One may say of Mr. Orchardson's work as a whole that it is more conscientious than inspired.

In Mr. Lavery's work we notice no new departure. The "Mrs. Wetzlar" is by far the most attractive of his exhibits, and in Mr. C. H. Shannon there is still a souvenir of someone else, of some old master imitated, and we would like to suggest that "La Dame au gant" is a bold title for a modern artist to select. Does it not at once challenge a comparison with the masterpiece of the Louvre? We do not recall having seen the work of Mr. Sholto Douglas before in this exhibition, but we can congratulate the society on having procured so charming a picture as "The Sisters." These portrait groups which are not merely portraiture are always welcome; but in this case we detect an originality of lighting and arrangement, together with a very delicate artistic sensibility, which make this work most welcome.

Interesting paintings are sent by Messrs. Walton, Nicolet, Mancini, Rothenstein, Harrington Mann, Alexander Jamieson, Lorimer, Llewellyn, and Neven du Mont.

CORRESPONDENCE.

STUMBLING PONY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I recently bought a small pony, which I both ride and drive. He is going high, four years old, and very tractable. I find, however, that he is very apt to stumble, both when ridden and driven. I would be glad to know of any treatment which I might adopt to break him of this fault.—COUNTRY PARSON.

[We shall be glad to have the opinions of our correspondents on this interesting point.—ED.]

ROBERT BURNS AND THE TROUT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Our poets are generally very accurate in their adaptation of natural history to the purposes of poetical embellishment. Pre-eminent amongst these is Shakespeare, who, although he makes numerous references to animal life, is almost invariably correct in his citation of the habits of bird and beast. Only in one case has he been declared to be incorrect. Burns, in his exquisite elegy on the death of Captain Matthew Henderson, invokes the whole gamut of animal emotions to swell the chorus of lament, and naturalists have commented on his wealth of illustration drawn from animated Nature. In one of his poems, however, entitled "Now Spring has Clad the Grove in Green," at page 498 of the delightful limp edition published by George Newnes, Limited, Burns seems to be caught napping. The second verse runs thus :

" The trout in yonder wimplin' burn,
That glides, a silver dart,
And, safe beneath the shady thorn,
Defies the angler's art."

Now, Burns tends to lull the trout (*Salmo fario*) into a false sense of security, and John Younger of St. Boswells, the Izak Walton of the Borders, points this out rather neatly. Referring to this verse, and the last line specially, he says, "This the trout cannot do, for its clammy nose and clear round eyes are ever protruded on the alert for a fly or a worm, and well the angler knows where and how to drop the wormed hook into the pool before him. When a whale is not safe in the Polar Ocean, talk, forsooth, of a trout being safe in a burn!" Your readers who love to ply the gentle art by Tweedside may be familiar with his name, and some may recall the sterling Borderer, who was cobbler, poet, angler, economist, and moralist—all of these in no mean degree! His treatise on river angling acquired much celebrity in his day, though not so common now. Younger's autobiography brings out his shrewd powers of observation and great natural intelligence. Prizes having been offered or the best essay on the "Temporal Advantages of the Sabbath to

the Labouring Classes," John Younger entered the lists in a competition extending over England and Scotland. By and by he was summoned to London to receive the second prize of £15, the presentation being made by the Earl of Shaftesbury at Exeter Hall, in presence of a large, distinguished assemblage—surely a remarkable achievement for the humble cobbler-poet of Tweedside. This was in 1847.—JEDWATER.



DISCUSSING THE CATCH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I enclose a photograph for your consideration. It was taken at Folkestone, down at the harbour, this year. If by any chance it might be suitable for publication in your paper, I should be very pleased to see it there. It might be called "Discussing the Catch." Hoping it may meet with your approval—T. D. BUCKNILL, Hylands House, Epsom.

RESTORATION.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It will be in the remembrance of your readers that in July, 1902, photographs of Chastleton House appeared in COUNTRY LIFE. Amongst them was one of the Long Gallery, at the top of the house, showing, alas! the sadly dilapidated state of the beautiful domed ceiling. All along one side the timbers had rotted owing to the roof becoming defective, causing the plaster to fall, and thereby making unsightly holes. In 1802 Mr. John Jones, the then possessor, re-roofed the house at considerable expense, and partially mended the ends of the beams; but he did not finish the work, and the dilapidated ceiling has been an eyesore ever since. To restore this ceiling has been my ambition for years, and my nephew thoroughly shared the feeling. At length the work has been accomplished, and what pleases me greatly is that it has been entirely done by local workmen, who have worked in the spirit of the olden days, taking both pleasure and pride in it. Mr. John Innell Minchin, of whose artistic carvings there are several specimens both in the church and the house, prepared the moulds for the various patterns, thirteen in all, and Messrs. Cecil and Ernest Newman cast and fixed them. The work has been done so excellently that no one who had not seen the ceiling previously could detect where the new joins the old. The curious grotesque heads on each side the west window, which the children of the family for many generations have called Gog and Magog, remain, of course, untouched; and to mark the period of the restoration the lozenge of my arms and my nephew's shield (Whitmore Jones and Dickens) are placed in corresponding positions by the east window. One word about the workmen employed. John Innell Minchin comes of an old Cotswold yeoman family. He was my brother's confidential servant for many years, and he used to employ his leisure hours in practising carving in oak; he is entirely self-taught, never having had any lessons in either carving or drawing. He is

now in my nephew's employ, and is settled in the village. Cecil and Ernest Newman, though now living in an adjoining parish, consider themselves belonging to Chastleton, for the name of Newman appears regularly in the parish register through nearly three hundred years, as their ancestors were born, married, and buried in due succession. They come of a long line of masons; their great-grandfather, George, was the head-workman employed by John Jones, a most tyrannical master; he used to go at night, after the workmen had gone, and try with his knife to pick out the plaster from between the stones. If he succeeded in doing this, the next morning the men had to pull down the previous day's work and do it all over again. But the method made good workmen.—MARY WHITMORE JONES.

THE WHITE FEATHER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—With reference to the remarks of your correspondent, "W. E. G." I may say I have observed in my own garden here recently a sparrow with a perfectly white tail, and also within the last few days one with white flight feathers in each wing. Both were young cock birds, one being little more than a fledgeling. Is it noticeable that very late broods yield more white-feathered birds than early ones?—ROSE F. CHETWYND, Smethwick, Birmingham.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In answer to one of your correspondents concerning white feathers in wild birds, a white pied wagtail stayed near my home in Huntingdonshire for some time; it was all white, except for one or two dark feathers, and was with several others, which were, apparently, out of the same nest, but had only the ordinary markings.—C. A. L.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—There can be no doubt that partial albinism is on the increase in sparrows, in London at all events. Two years ago I was in London for six months, and I cannot remember seeing more than two specimens, whereas this year I have observed several, of which I distinctly recall the following: Two cocks, with the wings and tail mostly white, one of which haunts the vicinity of the Clock Tower in the Zoological Gardens, and the other the street near Chalcot Crescent, Primrose Hill; another cock with the upper tail coverts white, which lives in Albert Road, where also at least two others show white feathers. Besides these, I have seen a hen in Hyde Park with all the tail white but one or both of the central feathers, and another hen with most of the wings white, which I observed in one of the small streets just north of Oxford Street. In addition to these I have seen one or two more white-marked specimens which I cannot exactly record. White being, as bird-fanciers well know, a colour which is strongly hereditary and apt to increase, we may reasonably expect pied sparrows to become quite common objects—of the town, if not of the country—if this sort of thing goes on.—FRANK FINN.

HYBRID PIGEONS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Would you kindly insert the following question in COUNTRY LIFE? Would any readers kindly say if they know of wood-pigeons, also stock-doves, breeding in a garden aviary, and would either of these birds mate with a house pigeon?—M. K.

THE BALKAN VINTAGE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It may interest your readers to see how the grapes are pressed in the



much-talked-of Balkan provinces. The enclosed photographs I took lately during a tour there. The heaps of grapes are to be seen lying on the ground, and the skin which the boy is tying up is full of squashed grapes, and is ready to be taken down on a donkey's back to the nearest wine-press.—F. FORMBY BACK, *Egyptian Gazette*.

A NOVEL WALKING-STICK.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I am sending you a photograph of a walking-stick made from the stem of a foxglove grown in my garden. The plant was 8ft. 2in. high, and had on it 864 blooms, buds, and seed-pods, all coming from the main stem. When cutting it down, I shook out the seed, and found I had 1 1/2 oz. On counting the number of seeds in a grain, I found there were 810. This would make, I think, 442,462 to the 1 1/2 oz., but if we add one-third more for seed wasted—a very moderate estimate for this season—it gives a total increase from 1 to 589,949. Is there any other plant, annual or biennial, growing in our English gardens, that would show such a large increase as the foxglove? The stick is perfectly sound and well preserved.—A. T.

MAKING A DRIVE.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—I am laying out a drive about 100yds. long on an incline of about 1 in 12 on a clay soil. I am very anxious that this drive should be as hard and dry as possible in all weathers, and I should be exceedingly obliged for any advice you may be able to give me as to the best possible method of construction and what material should be used.—H. PARKER LOWE.

[With your drive at the gradient you speak of it ought not to give much trouble. We should recommend the clay being dug out all through to a depth of 1 1/2 ft. or 2 ft. and to the width that it pleases you to lay the road. Then lay down a mattress of "faggots," as they are called—i.e., bundles of undergrowth as they are sold when coppices are cut. This forms a good draining basis. The piping for further drainage depends somewhat on the way that the water has a natural tendency to run. If any stream or spring or considerable run of surface water crosses the line of the proposed drive, you must carry this under the level of the drive by large pipes. In addition to this it is better, while you are about the work, to run comparatively small pipes—say 4in.—along each side of the road, with gratings to let the water down to them, at intervals depending on the amount of surface water that you think you will want to carry off; but often, if adequate waterways are made beneath the drive and across its line, these horizontal pipes are not needed. Over the mattress of faggots you must put a layer of any sort of big rubble or stone that you can get hold of most readily or cheaply. This need not be of good quality. But the top layer of all, which you will lay above this, must be the best and hardest you can procure at reasonable cost. The best is cheapest in the end. Exactly what you will use depends upon the district and the convenience of getting different materials. Where you are, we imagine, Croydon gravel could be obtained. The flints from the chalk stratum of which this is constituted are very good for the top surface, also some limestone is good and even some sandstone, where it is hardened by a sufficient impregnation of iron, but probably the first is the best where it can be got. Induce the County Council (or Urban District Council probably in your case) to let you have the use of the steam roller, if they will; and with such an incline as you have it will do quite well if you roll all pretty flat, but it is better even here to have a slightly hog-backed surface to your drive. In any case, it is likely that in a short while you may have to run in some more of the hard upper stuff in ruts and perhaps where the horses go in the middle. It is possible this will not be needed, and certainly ought not to need doing more than once for the drive to be made durable for many years. Some people, of course, like beach pebbles for their drives, but these never bind, require constant rolling, and a smooth surface is far preferable for all rubber-tyred wheels.—ED.]

